RECORD ANYTHING ON YOUR PC

And 9 other brilliant things you never knew Windows could do p50

ISSUE 327

For people who love the internet

Webuser

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New wonders of the web

When Street View launched in the UK, I thought it was the most incredible thing I'd ever seen – there's my house! And my office! And someone with a blurry face who might be my postman! These days, I check Street View as casually as I might once have looked up a number in the phone book, but there's no denying that it's still a modern marvel.

The web never ceases to amaze, and in this issue's cover feature (page 42) we've rounded up 40 of its latest wonders. Hopefully, at least some of them – such as turning your DNA into a portrait or using a ring to unlock your front door – will be as new and impressive to you as they were to me.

You may also be amazed to hear that BitTorrent isn't solely for illegal file-sharing. On page 52, we reveal the best ways to use it legally.

Robert Irvine
robert_irvine
@dennis.co.uk
#webuser

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2 How to back up photos from your phone to your PC automatically **page 34**

3 How to turn Chrome's New Tab page into a to-do list **page 36**

4 How to stop hidden programs hogging your bandwidth **page 61**

5 How to move a file to another folder without changing its date **page 64**

WE LIKE...

PlayStation Vita TV

The Sony PlayStation family welcomes a tiny new arrival – a set-top box that lets you stream video and play loads of classic old PS games on your TV.

Google honours tech women

A Google-sponsored gallery to mark the role of women in technology has opened at code-cracking HQ Bletchley Park.

WE DON'T LIKE...

TSB crashes on first day

The website of newly revived bank TSB crashed within hours of launch. On the bright side, this banking crash won't bring down the world economy.

No free Amazon phone after all

Amazon has denied that it's planning to launch a free smartphone, following a report on jessicalessin.com.

ISSUE 327 19 SEPTEMBER 2013 **ON THE COVER**

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ESSENTIAL MASTERCLASS

Your top priority this fortnight

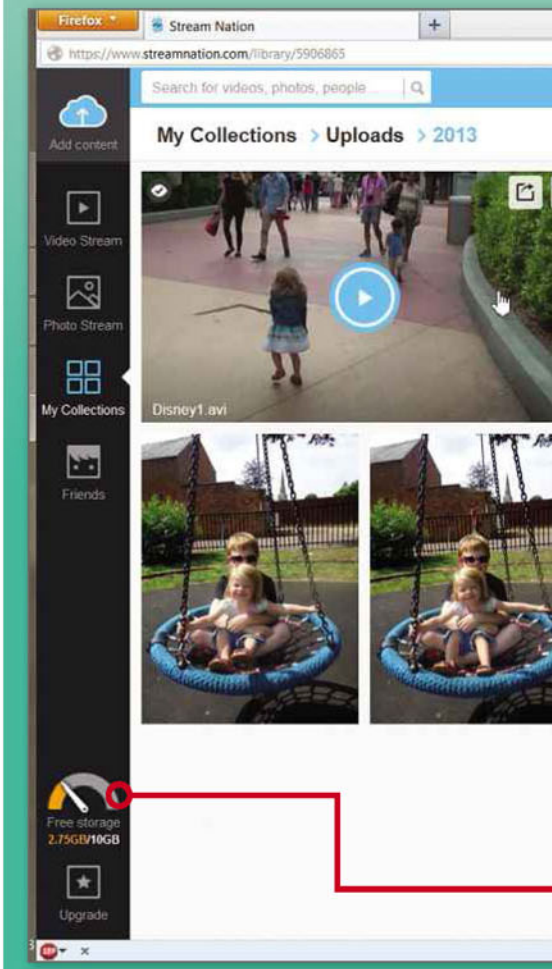
Stream Nation | www.streamnation.com

Like Flickr and YouTube rolled into one, Stream Nation offers one place to store and share your digital media. Here's what you need to know

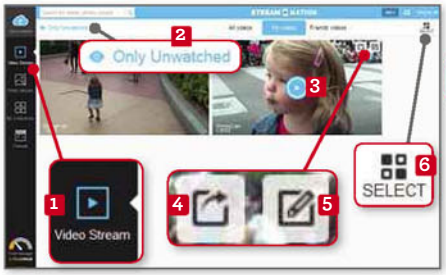
Storing and sharing photos and videos online is handy, but it's a pain having to use two different services to do it. Stream Nation solves the problem by letting you upload both types to one site. You only get 250MB of storage to begin with, but like Dropbox and other similar services, you can earn additional free space by completing tasks, such as posting on Facebook. There's also the choice of four paid-for premium plans, with prices starting at £4 a month for 100GB, rising to £19 a month for unlimited space. You can upload files through the web interface or use the free software for Windows and Mac OS X.

1 Choose how to add your files, either from the web, 1 or by uploading them from your computer, 2 your mobile 3 or Dropbox. 4 If you choose the first option, you can paste a link to the item, 5 or drag and drop files onto the target. 6 They'll be transferred to your account.

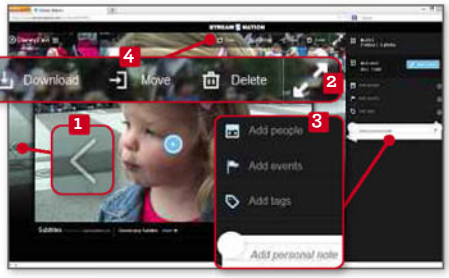
2 Transferring files using the upload tool preserves existing albums and tags. It automatically uploads from My Pictures and My Videos, 1 but you can click to deselect them. You can also select Public Pictures and Public Videos 2 and import files from Adobe Lightroom or Picasa. 3 Click Get Started 4 to begin.



3 In subsequent uploads you can manage which folders to monitor, 1 and quickly upload items by dragging and dropping. 2 Uploads are private by default. Click Transfers 3 to see what's happening. You can add additional files from there. Settings 4 lets you manage your preferences and upload speeds.



4 Video Stream 1 lets you choose which videos to watch and you can filter them to show only those you haven't seen. 2 Hover your mouse over a video to play 3 or share it. 4 Click the Edit button 5 to add a cover, move, download or delete it. Select 6 lets you add tags, and move or delete videos.



5 The play page lets you watch the video. You can move to the next or previous clip 1 and go full screen. 2 You can also add people, events, tags and a note to your videos. 3 If you hover over the video, you'll see options for downloading, moving or deleting it. 4

Get more practical advice at forum.webuser.co.uk

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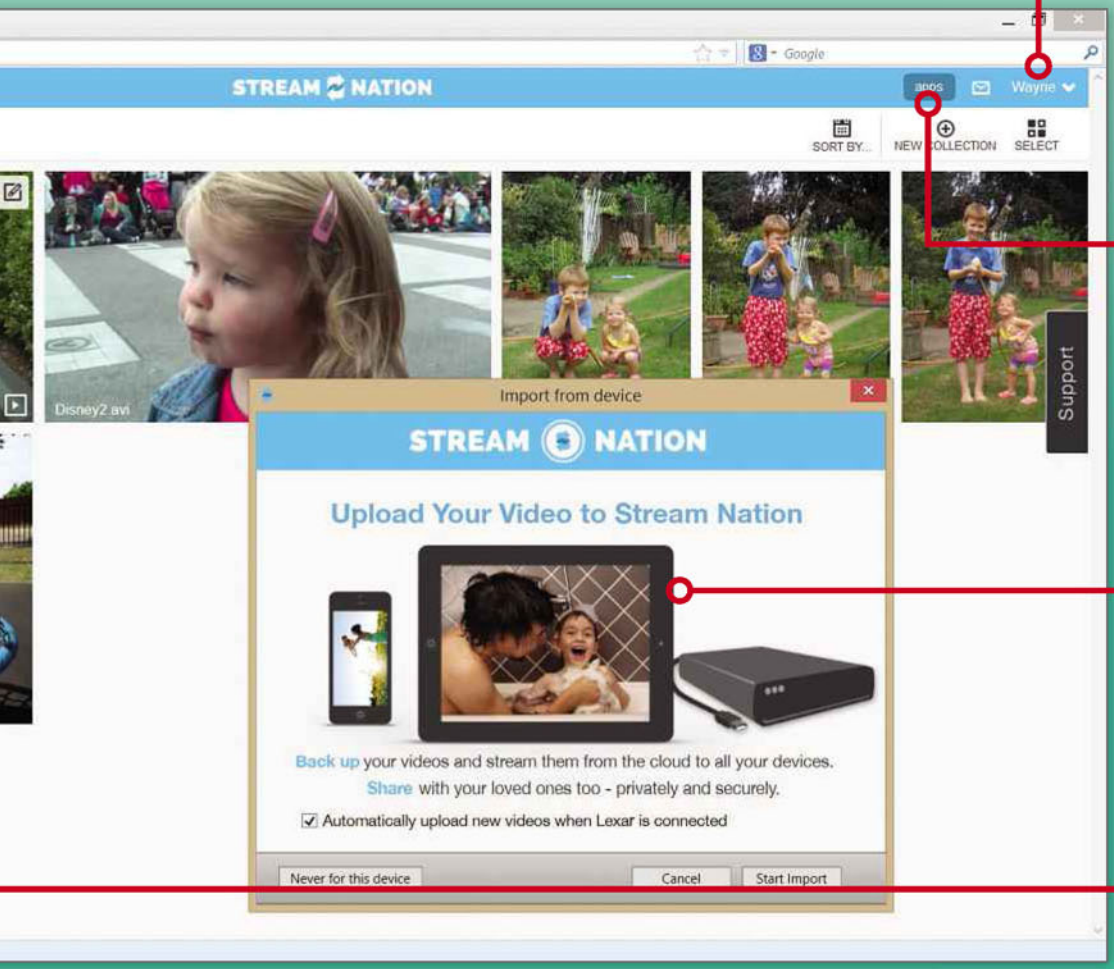


PROFILE

Click here to change your details, see how much space you have remaining and manage email notifications

APPS

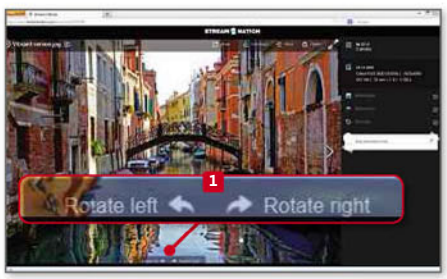
As well as the uploader software, there are apps for the iPhone and iPad, an XBMC plug-in and a Chrome extension

IMPORT FROM DEVICE

When you connect a USB device to your computer, Stream Nation will automatically offer to import its contents

FREE STORAGE

You can see how much space you have and boost it by completing tasks. You can earn up to 10GB of free space



6 The Photo Stream is similar to the one for video. You can choose which photos to view and manage them in the same way. Once you select an image, you can view, edit, download or share it. You can also rotate the shot left or right by hovering your mouse over it. 1

7 My Collections 1 is where you can view and organise all your content. You can explore existing collections 2 and create new ones. 3 You can also sort your content by name, creation date or addition date. 4 If you're not sure where something is located, you can search for it. 5

8 Inviting people to connect to you on Stream Nation is easy. Click the Friends button, 1 then the 'Invite your family' box. 2 You can send invites by email or Facebook. Just select the option you want and follow the instructions. When people accept your invitation, they'll appear under Friends.

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Spies crack web encryption and 'undermine user privacy'

What happened?

Information leaked by whistleblower Edward Snowden alleged that the US National Security Agency (NSA) has cracked portions of the encryption techniques that keep our online activities secure.

According to reports, the NSA has spent billions of dollars over the past decade on trying to break encryption, and in 2010 it partly succeeded. The first technique to be cracked was HTTPS, the system that encrypts most webmail services and social-networking traffic. The second was Secure Sockets Layer (SSL), which protects transactions when you're shopping and banking online.

However, that's not all: the NSA is also accused of deliberately weakening online encryption systems, in order to "undermine the major tools protecting the privacy of everyday communications" (bit.ly/undermine327). For example, a flaw discovered by Microsoft in an international encryption standard is now believed to have been inserted by US government spies.

A number of unnamed web and security companies were accused of collaborating with the NSA by putting 'backdoors' into their products to give spies access to encrypted data when they couldn't break in themselves.

The reports didn't reveal just how far US spies have got in their attempts to crack encryption and suggested that other forms of "strong" encryption remain secure – but for how long remains to be seen.

The leaked documents said the goal of the encryption-cracking operation, which is echoed by similar, though less extensive efforts from the UK's GCHQ (Government Communications Headquarters), is to ensure spies have the ability to comb through internet traffic and activity to prevent terrorism and crime.

Security expert Bruce Schneier told *The Guardian* that "the NSA is undermining the very fabric of the internet" (bit.ly/guardian327), and called for web engineers to fight back and come up with new methods of protection. Reports also stated that the two spying agencies had cracked mobile phones, obtaining access to messages, contacts and other private data on Android, Apple and BlackBerry devices.

How will it affect you?

The exact effects of these revelations are impossible to tell, but it means that what you do online isn't as secure as you thought. The simple fact is that a backdoor for the NSA is a backdoor for anyone – and it could only be a matter of time before criminals exploit the holes that spies have opened.

On top of that, the existing protections we do have are now weaker than they should be, thanks to the NSA's interference. Any flaws or weaknesses the spies have snuck in are issues that affect all of us.

The question is: what can you do about it? There are still strong encryption methods that can keep our online activities safe and secure, but they're not always easy enough for everyday use. Furthermore, at this point we should assume any encryption method has and will be targeted and penetrated by spy agencies such as the NSA and GCHQ.

If you're angered at the prospect of the NSA reading your emails, or worried about the security implications of the backdoors apparently built into Google and Microsoft services (which the companies naturally deny) another alternative is to switch to a less well-known email provider.

What do we think?

We think this is surely the most explosive revelation to come via Edward Snowden, and it smacks of arrogance on the part of the NSA. The agency seems to think it's the only one with a right to privacy and security, and has effectively put billions of web users at risk to make its job easier.

We also wonder about the exact nature of that job. Has access to all this private data led to any benefits? Have any terror attacks been thwarted? Frankly, we don't know. The NSA refuses to provide any details and the tech firms have all been gagged from disclosing further information. But at this point, we have to say, we don't really trust anyone with our data.

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Apple unveils new iPhones

What happened?

Apple unveiled the iPhone 5S, its new flagship smartphone, which offers an updated camera, an improved processor and better battery life. The handset was launched alongside a cheaper, plastic version, the iPhone 5C.

Both phones run Apple's new mobile operating system, iOS 7, and have a 4in Retina display with a 1,136 x 640 resolution. Both include an 8-megapixel camera, but as the top-of-the-range model, the iPhone 5S has the best new features. Chief among these are the 64-bit A7 processor, which Apple describes as "Desktop class", and a fingerprint reader called Touch ID that you tap to unlock the phone and which can also be used to approve iTunes and App Store purchases. Another major change is the colour scheme: the 5S will be available in gold, silver and "space grey". The 5C, meanwhile, will be available in a range of bright colours – blue, white, yellow, pink and green, which are designed to coordinate with iOS 7's vibrant array of wallpapers.

How will it affect you?

If you're an iPhone lover, the new features on the 5S will undoubtedly entice you to upgrade, although the price is predictably steep: £549 for the 16GB model, £629 for 32GB and £709 for the 64GB. Even the plastic, less advanced 5C costs from £469 SIM-free, although you'll be able to get it for less than £100 on contract. If you really want a new iPhone, but you're on a budget, your best bet is now the two-year-old 8GB iPhone 4S, which is now free with a contract from mobile providers.

What do we think?

We think the new phones look fantastic, especially the colours and redesigned iOS, but they seem like more of a stopgap, while Apple prepares the iPhone 6, than the massive leap forward we've seen in the past. Touch ID sounds clever and easy to use, but it's not foolproof as a security system unless used in conjunction with a PIN, and fingerprint sensors have been known to degrade over time. Still, we welcome Apple's new strategy in offering phones at different price points.

Google announces Android KitKat

What happened?

Google has confirmed the name of the next version of Android, 4.4, and it has come as a bit of a surprise: KitKat (www.android.com/kitkat). Google has given sweet names to all versions of Android, from Donut and Froyo (frozen yogurt) to the most recent, Jelly Bean. The next name had been widely tipped to be Key Lime Pie, but Google said the American dessert wasn't as widely known. The naming deal apparently won't see money trade hands between Google and Nestlé, but there will be Android-themed versions of the chocolate bar.

How will it affect you?

If you felt stupid asking phone store staff "does it run Ice Cream Sandwich?", you may feel even more foolish now. On the upside, the Android-branded KitKat bars will give you the chance to win Google Play credit and Nexus 7s – and let you indulge your sweet tooth.

What do we think?

We think it is an odd move, but it appears to be more of a fun wheeze than a money-grabbing marketing tactic. However, no details have been revealed of what to expect from the updated operating system itself – not even a release date – so we'll wait and see if KitKat merits the hype.

Amazon bundles ebooks with print

What happened?

Amazon has finally unveiled plans to bundle discounted ebooks with their print editions – in much the same way it has with AutoRip, which gives you free MP3s of CDs you've bought from the store. Ebooks offered through Kindle MatchBook (bit.ly/matchbook327) won't necessarily be free, but the highest price for a digital title will be $2.99 (£1.90). MatchBook will apply to any participating book you've ever bought from Amazon. It will be available in the US from October, but there's no confirmation yet of the UK launch.

How will it affect you?

Assuming MatchBook does extend across the Atlantic, Amazon will start listing your previous book purchases on your account profile page (rather than just in your order history). If you have bought eligible physical books, you'll be able to download the ebook versions for free or for a small charge – even if they were purchased as a gift 10 years ago.

What do we think?

We think MatchBook is an excellent move, offering us a digital download to read instantly on our Kindles, while at the same time giving us a copy to lend friends and display on our shelves. Hopefully publishers will see the value in this and get behind it, which will keep prices as low as possible.

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WHAT'S NEW ONLINE

10 brilliant things to do on the web this fortnight

Stream any song for free with Xbox Music

Microsoft's Xbox Music streaming service was built for the Xbox 360 and bundled with Windows 8, but you can now get it just by signing up online.

It's free for the first six months, and you get 10 free hours a month after that, or you can buy a 'music pass' for £8.99 per month (bit.ly/musicpass327).

With the pass, you can buy downloads and save favourites and playlists across your Android, iOS and Windows devices. The apps for Android (bit.ly/xdroid327) and iOS (bit.ly/xapp327) are free.

The move creates real competition for Spotify, Google Play Music and the biggest digital music 'ecosystem' of them all, iTunes. Will you give this once-hidden gem a try? Let us know what you think.

www.xbox.com/en-GB/Music

Get Netflix on your TiVo

bit.ly/tivo327

Video streaming service Netflix (www.netflix.com) is coming to Virgin Media's TiVo set-top box, making shows such as *Breaking Bad* and *House of Cards* available on demand on TV. The service is being piloted to 40,000 of Virgin Media's 1.7million TiVo subscribers, who will also need a Netflix subscription (£5.99 per month). Virgin hopes to roll it out to all subscribers by the end of the year.

Use Chrome apps on your Desktop

bit.ly/desktop327

For its fifth birthday on 5 September, Chrome released selected apps from its Web Store (chrome.google.com/webstore) into the "wild" of your Desktop. Go to the top link to browse all the apps that can be downloaded to your PC and used offline and outside your browser, including Pocket (bit.ly/pocket327) and WeatherBug (bit.ly/weather327).

Download BBC programmes to your Android

bit.ly/beeb327

BBC iPlayer has finally added downloading to its Android app, a year after iOS (bit.ly/iosplayer327). Both apps now let you keep any downloaded programme for 30 days, or seven days if you've started watching it. There's an extra treat on Android only – you can download shows in the background while your screen sleeps.

Search every tweet ever tweeted

topsy.com

Twitter's search tool has a very short memory, but that's not a problem because new website Topsy lets you search every tweet ever tweeted: all 425 billion of them. Dig in for an intriguing glimpse at the world's reaction to seven years of events and non-events.

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Sit on a spaceship's tail

bit.ly/galactic327

Feeling cooped up? Go to the link above, click play and hold tight. This, says Richard Branson, is what a trip on the Virgin Galactic SpaceShipTwo supersonic flight looks like from the inside, although it actually looks more like you're strapped to the outside. Beautiful, if not actually real.

Turn your old machine into cash

bit.ly/recycle327

Apple's Reuse and Recycle Programme lets you swap your old iPhone, iPad or computer – Mac or PC – for cash or Apple Store credit, even if it's broken. Just go to the website to find out what your old machine could earn.

See Google's film about The Clash

bit.ly/clash327

Head over to the Google Play YouTube channel to see *Audio Ammunition*, Google's new web-exclusive documentary about UK punk legends The Clash.

Test your Eighties pop trivia skills

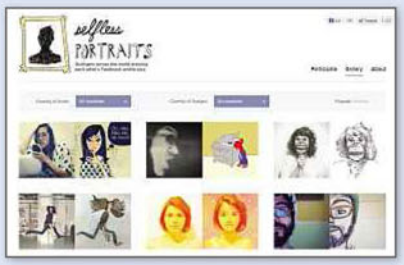
bit.ly/pop327

You Can't Do Eighties Pop Trivia Under Pressure, claims this online quiz. Oh yeah? It's fast, furious and fun, especially if you know or care who Midge Ure is.

Let a stranger draw your Facebook photo

selflessportraits.com/gallery/

Selfless Portraits (make sure you include the end slash) is a beautiful, funny and touching collection of people's Facebook profile pics, recreated by total strangers. Click Popular to see the best, and click Participate to join in.



5 TO FOLLOW ON TWITTER

@apod
Daily photos of the universe with explanatory tweets by the experts

@halfpics
Another day, another photo of a thing cut in half. Range Rover, tube of toothpaste, "soup in process of cooking"...

@museumnerd
Find out what's on show in the world's museums and art galleries

@baffled
Test your word skills with a daily haiku challenge

@dailyinfographc
Life, the universe and everything in infographic form

FIRST LOOK Kindle Paperwhite 2013

bit.ly/paperwhite327

Amazon's Kindle e-reader range has managed to hold its own as a single-use device in a world flooded with tablets that want to do it all. True to form, the latest Kindle Paperwhite is packed with improvements rather than new features.

Paperwhite's E Ink display remains its top priority. The 6in, 212ppi display is crisper on the new model, with higher contrast and a non-reflective surface to eliminate glare. The upgraded "new generation" light shines onto the display rather than into your eyes. The display houses a capacitive touchscreen that responds just as accurately as before, though Amazon claims that it's now "tighter".

Improved display aside, you have to look hard at the new and old Paperwhite models to spot the difference. They're the same size (169 x 117 x 9.1mm) with the same black, rubbery plastic casing, though the new version is a few grams lighter, at a wrist-friendly 206g.

Hardware tweaks include a 25-per-cent boost to the processor, which makes for even snappier page turns. Amazon claims the battery lasts eight weeks on a single charge.

Software improvements include full integration of familiar Kindle tools, such as Dictionary, Wikipedia look-ups and X-Ray (a kind of book site map) in a single tabbed interface. You'll even find some new features here, such as the Page Flip function that lets you browse back and forth through pages and sections of a book without losing your place. Book-discovery service Goodreads (www.goodreads.com), bought by Amazon in April, is now built in. As before, you get free cloud storage for all Amazon content and 2GB internal storage.

At £109 (Wi-Fi only, or £169 for 3G) there's no question that the Paperwhite is amazing value for money, but it's not worth chucking out your old model to buy the new one: there's just not enough difference. However, if you've yet to make the e-reader plunge, the new Paperwhite is probably the best thing you can do with £109.

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BEST NEW WEBSITES

We review this fortnight's best new and relaunched websites

Webuser SITE OF THE FORTNIGHT

CINEMA

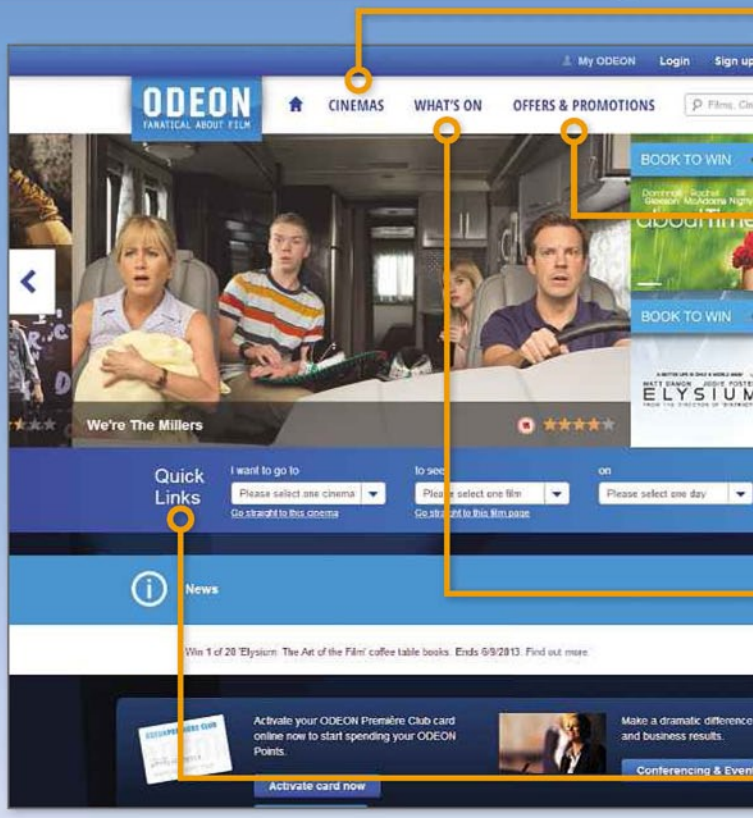
RELAUNCH

Odeon

www.odeon.co.uk

The revamped Odeon website had a rather bumpy relaunch, but it's now up and running, and it looks fantastic – a huge improvement on the cramped and dated old design. The tablet-friendly homepage now features large photos from the latest releases, which you can hover your mouse over to bring up a Book Now button. Information about the Odeon Premiere Club and the IMAX experience, which used to clutter the page, is now sensibly tucked away, while the all-important options for selecting a cinema, film and date stretch across the centre of your screen. Once you've made your choice, you are instantly presented with show times, screening type (Peak, Super Saver or Special) and whether the movie is 2D or 3D. The booking process is faster, prices are displayed clearly and it's easy to choose a seat, making the refreshed site a much better experience for cinemagoers.

Our rating ★★★★★



TRADING

RELAUNCH

CeX

uk.webuy.com

Get past the headache-inducing colours and ever-scrolling banner, and the revamped CeX site has a messy charm. Browse categories such as Gaming, Phones and Electronics, and click 'I want to buy' or 'I want to sell' below an item that catches your eye. We like that CeX is upfront about the price you'll pay or receive, and that you can instantly check the stock level, both online and at your nearest store. The weird illustrations shown when no product image is available are also amusing. The site won't win any prizes for design, but if you're looking to flog your old stuff or pick up a bargain, it's definitely worth exploring.

Our rating ★★★★☆

HEALTH

NEW

Local Cancer Statistics

bit.ly/cancer327

The website from Cancer Research UK provides lots of hard, reliable data about the prevalence and treatment of cancer in your area. Enter your postcode or the name of your local or healthcare authority to view information including average waiting times, the incidence of different types of cancer per 100,000 people and mortality figures. You can also compare two areas to uncover evidence of a "postcode lottery". The statistics are presented in an easy-to-understand manner and should prove useful to patients and healthcare professionals alike.

Our rating ★★★★☆

Reviews by Robert Irvine

WorldMags.net
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RATINGS GUIDE

5 Superb. Impossible to fault in terms of design, content and features. Bookmark it now!

4 Very good. Combines a smart design with appealing content. Definitely worth a visit

3 Good. Lacks some functionality. Have a look if the subject interests you

Web User looks at hundreds of websites, but only those we award three stars or higher appear in Best New Websites

PRIVACY **NEW**

JustDelete.me

justdelete.me

This site helps you delete your online accounts in a jiffy. It lists hundreds of popular services and colour-codes each one according to how difficult it is to leave: from green for Easy (eBay and Instagram) to black for Impossible (Netflix and Evernote). Click an entry to be taken to the relevant deletion page or instructions, or choose 'Show info' for a summary of the process. JustDelete .me isn't an original idea – the similar AccountKiller (www.accountkiller.com) has been around for years – but it's informative and very useful. There's also a Chrome extension (see page 36).

Our rating ★★★★☆

MONEY **NEW**

Denied.co.uk

www.denied.co.uk

Getting turned down for a credit card, loan or mobile-phone contract can be disheartening and confusing. This site tries to help by offering free advice about obtaining credit and benefits, and explaining why you might be turned down. You can browse the concise but informative articles by category, find links to useful resources and read the blog for the latest news on money matters. Design-wise, Denied.co.uk is fairly unexciting, but this allows it to focus on the content, which is packed with useful facts and suggestions, and is pleasantly free of financial jargon.

Our rating ★★★☆☆

MUSIC **RELAUNCH**

Who Sampled

www.whosampled.com

Whenever you hear a new tune on the radio that sounds familiar, Who Sampled can tell you why. It connects more than 198,000 songs and 72,000 artists through samples, remixes and cover versions, and this redesign makes it easier than ever to browse. All the info for a particular track is now presented on a single page, the search facility has been enhanced to offer auto-complete and you can browse the site by genre, decade and keyword tag. We also love the new charts of the most sampled artists and songs. With it's fresh, cleaner look, it's a must for music buffs.

Our rating ★★★★★

Tell us about your website via webuser@dennis.co.uk

WorldMags.net

TRAVEL NEW

Station Stays

www.station-stays.co.uk

We like the idea behind this directory of hotels and B&Bs situated near UK railway stations. If you're only staying overnight, need to catch an early train or have trouble getting around, browse the lists of stations in England, Scotland and Wales to view available accommodation. This includes details of whether the hotel is adjacent to or a short walk from the station, and special notes such as "beautiful quiet setting". It's a shame there's no room for guest reviews, photos or info about rates and facilities, but this keeps things simple and you can click through to the hotels' websites. Let's hope more places are added soon.

Our rating ★★★☆☆

PRIVACY NEW

Check My Privacy

checkmyprivacy.net

A site that wants to check your privacy sounds a bit dodgy, but this one just highlights information you're unwittingly sharing, such as your operating system, browser, unsecure ports and location. We were surprised that it knew our exact co-ordinates until we realised Chrome's geolocation was turned on. Naturally, the site has a commercial side, and recommends several paid-for security programs, but it also lets you search the web anonymously using DuckDuckGo, and emphasises the need to be vigilant online. However, there are too many spelling mistakes for our liking and not enough impartial advice.

Our rating ★★★☆☆

ROAD SAFETY NEW

Mr Pothole

mr-pothole.co.uk

Mr Pothole is on a mission to improve the safety of Britain's disintegrating roads, by promoting awareness and challenging councils to perform essential repairs. His website highlights the extent of the 'pothole plague' using news stories, photos and videos. It's early days, and the site could do with a few more examples, but there are links to Mr Pothole's Facebook and Twitter pages, documentary evidence of his efforts (which date back to 1989) and comments from supporters. Most importantly, you can get involved with the campaign by signing the petition to the Department of Transport.

Our rating ★★★☆☆

SHOPPING RELAUNCH

Base.com

www.base.com

Base.com once sold everything from clothes to household goods, but it's now merged with DVD.co.uk to focus exclusively on entertainment. A tidy, touchscreen-friendly design organises the games, films and music by platform, including the forthcoming Xbox One and PlayStation 4, and lets you jump straight to Top Sellers and New Releases. Some of the products have no descriptions and there are few customer reviews, but prices are very competitive, beating Amazon on many items, and you get free UK delivery on everything. As a bonus, you can get 10 per cent off your first order, if you use the discount code DVD-BASE before 28 September.

Our rating ★★★★☆

TRAVEL NEW

Shandypockets

www.shandypockets.com

This bizarrely-named online travel magazine offers articles, reviews and interviews from professional journalists. These are written in the first person, which gives Shandypockets a more personal style than other, similar sites, and cover everything from 'laughter yoga' in Budapest to a hotel in Whitby. The features are accompanied by well-chosen photos, and there are also silly stories and videos to enjoy in the GAN (Going Anywhere Nice?) section. Shandypockets has only just launched, so there isn't a great deal of content yet, but its fresh, insightful take on travel reviews certainly looks promising.

Our rating ★★★☆☆

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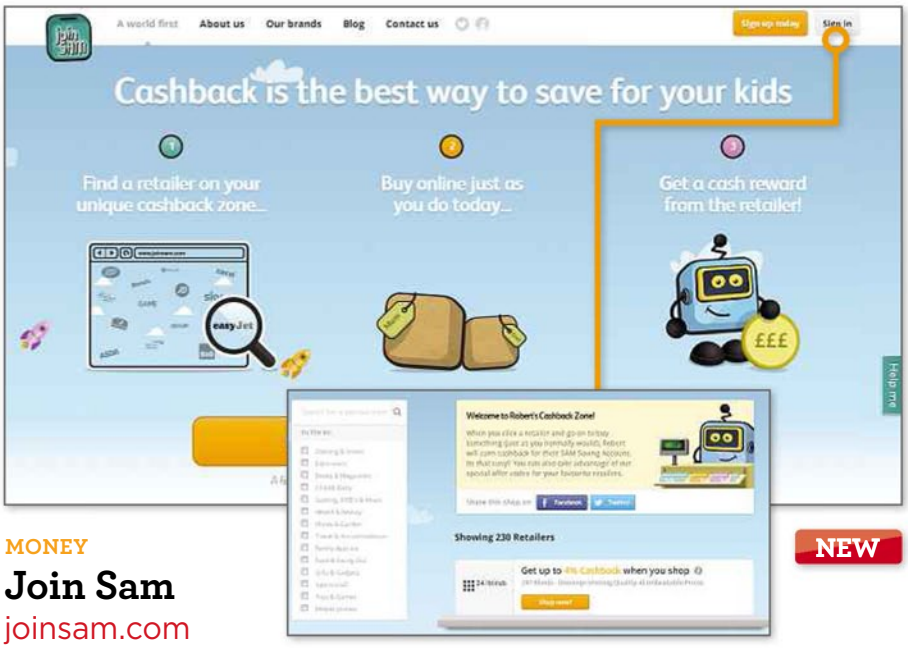
Cashback is the best way to save for your kids
Find a retailer on your unique cashback zone...
Buy online just as you do today...
Get a cash reward from the retailer!
Showing 230 Retailers

MONEY

Join Sam

joinsam.com

NEW

Join Sam is a cashback site for families, which teaches kids about the importance of saving money while their parents offset the cost of shopping online. Like other cashback sites, it lists retailers and discount codes that "reward" you when you click through to buy, but it uses a child-friendly, cartoony design hosted by the robot character Sam, and awards badges when you "do something great". It's easy to use, with a good selection of partner stores and offers. There are also some interesting features coming, such as Sam cards you can use at ATMs and in shops, and an option to let friends and relatives add money to your account.

Our rating ★★★★☆

ALSO NEW

TankTop Movies

movies.tanktop.tv

Our 'Site of the Fortnight' in Issue 313 is out of private beta to find you the latest films to watch online.

Motors.co.uk

www.motors.co.uk

The car-classifieds site has been fine-tuned to provide a smoother, faster experience on any device.

Your Home

yourhomemagazine.co.uk

The home-improvement magazine has relaunched its site, with new features and a fresh design.

Wedding

www.weddingandweddingflowers.co.uk

Discuss plans for your big day in the magazine's new reader forum.

Wallpaper*

www.wallpaper.com

The design magazine's site has had a stylish makeover to make it easier to browse on tablets.

KATE'S WEB CALENDAR

Kate Russell's top websites and apps for the next 14 days

GIVE UP SMOKING FOR STOPTOBER

stoptober.co.uk

This time last year I was preparing to take on Stobtober, the NHS-run annual campaign to help people give up cigarettes for the whole of October. Today I am still smoke-free and have never felt better – if I can do it, you can too. Head over to the official site to order a free support pack and download the iOS or Android app for daily motivation and plenty of tips and techniques to help you on your way to a smoke-free life. It's believed you'll live a week longer for every 28 days off the cigs (and you'll smell a lot nicer too!), so what are you waiting for?

LET TED-ED EDUCATE YOUR KIDS

ed.ted.com

Schoolchildren across the country will be celebrating on 1 October, as UK teachers hold a one-day strike over pay and pensions. But rather than just letting them skive off by sitting around all day watching YouTube videos, direct them to Ted-Ed for an educational experience. You'll find fun and free video lessons created by teachers and educators, complete with quizzes, extended notes and links to additional resources. The subjects covered include the Arts, Health and Science & Technology. It's a great way to make sure your kids' education isn't interrupted too much.

CELEBRATE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF OLDER PERSONS

digitalunite.com

It might surprise you to learn that the fastest growing demographic on Twitter is 55-64 year olds. Celebrate International Day of Older Persons on 1 October by signing up at Digital Unite, a website stuffed full of free training guides and resources to help you enjoy the many benefits of embracing technology. The site's Spring Online campaign is the biggest digital literacy campaign for older people in the UK, with thousands of events each year. My 85-year old grandmother still enjoys an independent life at home, thanks to her ability to use online services.

Kate presents Webscape for BBC Click and blogs at workingthecloud.biz

KEEP YOUR PC SAFE

Expert tips, latest threats and jargon-free info

SECURITY Q&A

Your questions answered by security specialists.
This issue's expert: Catalin Cosoi, Chief Security Strategist at Bitdefender (www.bitdefender.co.uk)

Q Can you ever be totally safe from malware infection on social sites such as Facebook and Twitter?

Darren Tailby, via email

A You can be totally safe, as long as you have protection installed on your PC, such as Bitdefender Safego (bit.ly/safego327), which scans potentially dangerous items on social networks. Safego also monitors your privacy settings, to detect if you might be leaving yourself open to infection, and offers a 'Warn friend' option that lets you alert your friends when something fishy has been posted in their news feeds. You can also stay safe on social sites by exercising common sense, and when we say "common sense", what we really mean is: don't ever install the monkey screensaver, no matter how cute the monkey is.

Q What are the main advantages of paid-for anti-virus products over free ones?

Jason Cooper, Facebook

A Usually, you'll get decent basic protection even from free anti-virus software and apps. However, if you're willing to splash out, the paid-for options provide a lot of additional features and let you configure them to work the way you want.

Some paid-for programs also give you increased security, not just convenience, by including a good firewall or a secure browser for online banking.

Q How deep does Bitdefender's 60-Second Virus Scanner really go?

Colin James, Twitter

A Bitdefender's free 60-Second Virus Scanner (bit.ly/60second327) tool goes deep enough to detect active threats on your PC. It scans critical system areas, checks every file that is currently open and verifies every thread of every program that's running. That's a bit like meeting someone and having the ability to find out everything they're thinking about and everything they've done today, including what they had for breakfast, all in less than a minute. The tool is equally adept at identifying threats.

Email us your security questions at webuser@dennis.co.uk

DECODED | Security jargon explained

Obad

Obad, or Backdoor.AndroidOS.Obad.a, is a particularly virulent Trojan that affects Android devices. It opens a back door on your phone or tablet, steals information, downloads malware, sends text messages to premium-rate numbers and infects Bluetooth devices. Kaspersky has called Obad the most sophisticated Android malware it's seen (bit.ly/kaspersky327), saying it's more like Windows malware than other Android Trojans. Also, because the Trojan uses encryption and works silently in the background, it's very hard to detect. Fortunately, it's still pretty rare.

SECURITY ALERT!

Facebook bug bounty

An electronics whiz collected a $12,500 (£8,000) bug-finders' bounty from Facebook after finding a flaw that let him delete members' photos. With a quick tweak to a link from the support team, Arul Kumar was able to delete photos without their owners' knowledge. Kumar sent Facebook's White Hat team a video in which he removed photos from Mark Zuckerberg's albums, and he promptly got his reward.
bit.ly/facebounty327

Google's IOS glitch

iOS users were locked out of their mobile accounts after updating to version 2.0.0 of Google's Authenticator app, which generates two-factor codes for services such as Evernote and Twilio. Google has now fixed the problem, issued an update (bit.ly/googleauth327) and posted a guide for those affected (bit.ly/authhelp327).
bit.ly/ios327

New banking Trojan

Online banking customers have been hit by a new Trojan called Hesperbot that steals bank logins and other valuable data by logging keypresses and taking screenshots. The Trojan got into computers in the UK and Europe after victims clicked fake PDF links in phishing emails that claimed to be from postal companies.
bit.ly/trojan327

Net dating scam

Online daters were conned out of $2million (£1.28million) by a group of scammers who posed as US troops looking for love. Victims included a British woman who sent $59,000 (£38,000) to her imaginary lonely heart. The bulk of the money was wired to collaborators in Nigeria before being funnelled to the scam's organisers, and much of it has never been recovered.
bit.ly/dating327

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WEB DESIGN & HOSTING Q&A

Your questions answered by professional experts.
This issue: Mark Esho, Managing Director of Free Virtual Servers (www.freevirtualservers.com)

Q What's the best way to protect a site made with a content-management system such as Joomla (www.joomla.org) or WordPress (www.wordpress.org), without using plug-ins?

Jason Cooper, Facebook

A All content-management systems can be made more secure with a strong username and password. Stay away from default usernames such as 'admin' and 'administrator', and use a password of around 15 characters using a mixture of upper- and lowercase letters, numbers and punctuation. A password should never have anything to do with your personal details or contain a word that can be found in a dictionary.

Change your username from the default and choose a long password to keep your website secure

Q I want to make a web-based forum for football supporters. I'll need a domain and a server, but what other hosting features should I be looking for? Can I do it all through one site?

Waddup, Web User Forums

A You can use one website, and there are hundreds of forum software packages available, both free and paid-for. Most will run on PHP (a programming language) and MYSQL (a database that can be hosted on a web server), so you need to ensure that your host supports this.

Some hosting companies offer a collection of common software tools that can be installed using a wizard, which is useful if you're not very technically adept. You should shop around for the best deals.

Most hosting packages offer all you need to get a forum online, including one-click installation

Q Can I upgrade my WordPress.com blog to a WordPress.org site, to get the plug-ins I need to take it up a level?

Count Zero, Web User Forums

A You need to find a hosting company that fits the specification required by the WordPress software (bit.ly/wpreq327). Some hosts offer shortcuts to install WordPress in a few clicks but others require you to upload via FTP (File Transfer Protocol) or your browser. Once the software's uploaded, use you browser to navigate to your domain and follow the three-step set-up. Used in this way, there are no restrictions on WordPress plug-ins, and you can even create your own.

To export your blog from WordPress.com, choose Tools from your Dashboard, then Export. Click Export, choose what to export ('All content', Posts, Pages or Feedback) and click Download Export File. You can then go to the Import option in the new WordPress.org blog and load all your content across to it.

<TOP TIPS>

Create better-looking forms

Gathering information about your visitors is key to the success of your website, but they won't want to fill out a dull and boring form. The new free service from Typeform (www.typeform.com) makes it easy to create attractive, interactive questionnaires. The free version lets you create three forms with 20 questions each, with a maximum of 5,000 respondents in total. You have to host the form on Typeform's site.

Curate YouTube and Twitter in WordPress.com

WordPress.com sites have a new option available through their posts' Add Media button, which lets you search for and select YouTube videos and Twitter messages without leaving your dashboard. You can capture what's going on in a particular hashtag or embed a video on a particular topic. Choose whether to insert a video or a tweet, and enter a search term, username or hashtag into the search box. Tick the ones you want from the list of results, and they'll automatically appear in your blog.

Site icons in a handy typeface

If your site uses common icons like Play buttons and social-media logos, you've probably got them uploaded as individual images. This means you have to recreate the image if you want to change the size or colour. A better idea is to use Genericons (genericons.com).

Upload this web font of 94 commonly used icons and you can liberally sprinkle them across your site. The font only take up 45KB of space so it's quick to load. You can then call up the icons via HTML and change their attributes using CSS.

Deal of the fortnight

Get 50 per cent off business hosting with Nativespace (www.nativespace.co.uk) by using the voucher code BACK2BIZ when ordering.

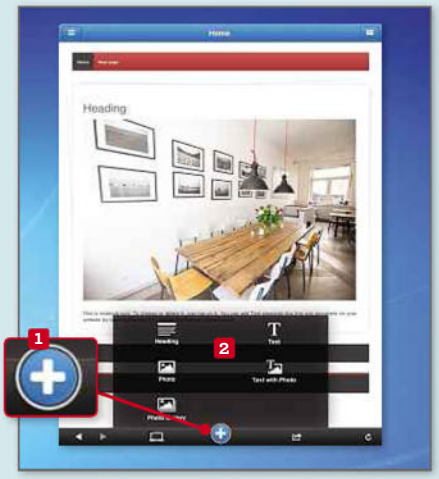
Email us your website building questions at webuser@dennis.co.uk

Like on Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/pages/Download-from-harks/124201754417002

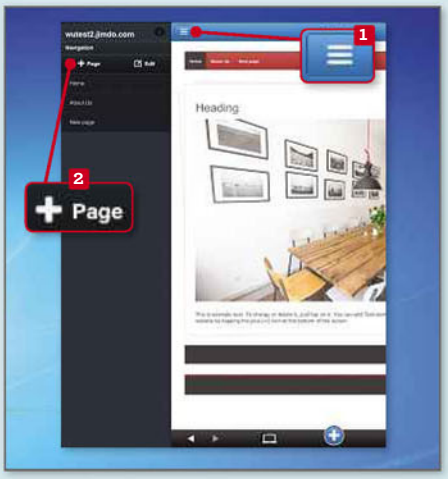
MINI WORKSHOP | Create and update a free website from your iPhone or iPad

Winner of a *Web User* Gold Award, online site-building tool Jimdo (www.jimdo.com) has just launched a new tool for iOS devices that lets you make changes to your website when you're away from your PC.

Jimdo: www.jimdo.com/mobile | 10 mins | iPhone, iPad



1 If you already have a Jimdo site, log in. Otherwise tap 'Sign up now', then choose a site design and domain. Tap 'Create a new website'. Your website pops up. Click the plus icon 1 to add new content, 2 or click an existing image or text to change it.



2 Press the menu button 1 to open the left sidebar. Here, you can add a new page to your site. Click Page 2 and type the page's name. Click the Edit button to reorder pages by dragging and dropping them into your preferred order, or click the red button to delete them.

3 Click the page layout button 1 to edit the way the page looks. You can add a new element, 2 change the order with the Edit button 3 or tap an element to edit it. You can edit or replace text. Pictures can be realigned, or you can add captions.

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Bitmore Universal Bluetooth Wireless Audio Adapter

Andy Shaw tests a device that gets music from your phone or tablet to the best speakers in your home

If you're over the age of 35 with an interest in music, you've probably invested in audio equipment that was cutting edge in its time but has since been left behind. The hi-fi systems of previous decades may be stuck with archaic formats such as turntables, tape decks and CD players, but their high-quality amplifiers and speakers often provide much better sound quality than the miniaturised sound systems of today.

The Bitmore Universal Music Receiver marries the convenience of a portable digital music library with the superior sound quality of your ageing hi-fi system, by letting you play music from your phone or tablet through your old-fashioned amplifier and speakers.

This tiny Bluetooth adapter is small enough to fit in the palm of your hand. It has a 3.5mm audio out socket, and comes with a double-ended audio cable, so you can plug it into practically anything with speakers.

If your speakers have a different kind of connection, such as phono sockets, you can buy the cables you need relatively cheaply from an electrical shop such as Maplin (bit.ly/maplin327). You can also plug headphones into the device, if you want to keep your phone hidden away.

Once you've connected the Bitmore Universal Music Receiver to your speakers, you just need to flick the switch on the side and pair the device with the Bluetooth on your phone or tablet. We tried this with an iPad and, by the time we had navigated to the iPad's Bluetooth section from the Settings menu, the Receiver was listed and waiting for us to connect. One tap and the job was done.

Compared to playing music through the iPad's own speakers, the increase in sound quality is phenomenal. Audiophiles won't get CD-quality music – Bluetooth streaming can't carry enough data to manage it – but the device supports the latest Bluetooth 4.0 and sound technologies to help maximise the quality, including A2DP (Advanced Audio Distribution Profile).

Our only complaint about the device concerns charging it. The Bitmore Universal Music Receiver comes with a built-in rechargeable battery (providing 6-10 hours of playback), which can be replenished via the Mini USB port. However, it only comes with a standard USB cable, so you'll need to get a compatible wall-socket charger if you don't want to charge it through your PC.

PRODUCT INFO

BITMORE UNIVERSAL BLUETOOTH WIRELESS AUDIO ADAPTER

www.bitmore.co.uk
Price: £24.99

SPECIFICATIONS

- 3.5mm audio-out port
- Mini USB port for charging
- Bluetooth 4.0, 3.0 and 2.0+EDR compatible
- 10m operating range
- Supports A2DP and AVRCP

FOR

- Connect old hi-fi equipment to your phone or tablet
- Great value device
- Save money on new speakers

AGAINST

- Wall-socket charger not included

OUR VERDICT

★★★★★

FEATURES	★★★★☆
PERFORMANCE	★★★★★
EASE OF USE	★★★★☆
VALUE FOR MONEY	★★★★★

This great-value device can bring your ageing stereo equipment out of redundancy and connect your top-quality speakers to the music stored on your phone or tablet. A larger collection of speaker cables and a charger suitable for a wall socket would add to its allure but, if you don't need them, you'll welcome the cheaper price that this pared-back package brings. If it can drag your old hi-fi and its superior speakers back into regular use, then it could save you hundreds of pounds on new equipment.

Discuss this review at forum.webuser.co.uk

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WorldMags.net

WD My Passport Slim

Andy Shaw puts a pocket-sized 1TB hard drive with integrated Dropbox back-up through its paces

My Passport Slim is Western Digital's latest portable hard drive. Its compact case is just over 12mm thick, making it small enough to fit comfortably in a shirt pocket. We tested the 1TB model, though it will also be available in a 2TB version by the end of the year.

The sturdy casing has the drive surrounded by a solid tray, with a metal lid covering the top. This provides plenty of protection from general wear and tear.

It's USB3 compatible but also works with USB2, if your PC doesn't have the faster ports. However, the drive uses its own special connector, so you need to use the supplied cable and can't swap it around with your other USB devices.

As usual with Western Digital, the package includes a bundle of WD's own software that lifts it above generic plug-and-play drives. It comes with three apps: Drive Utilities, Security and SmartWare Pro. The Drive Utilities include tools such as diagnostics and drive-wiping, which help maintain the My Passport Slim. Security lets you encrypt the drive so no-one can see what's on it, but beware – not even Western Digital can unlock its 256-bit encryption if you forget your password. SmartWare Pro is a back-up tool that sets up a regular file-transfer, and can also be used to control other external hard drives and NAS drives.

WD's software lifts the My Passport Slim above generic plug-and-play drives

Smartware Pro is also where the Dropbox integration occurs. You can perform a variety of tasks, such as backing up files from your PC to your new hard drive, backing up from PC to Dropbox, and even backing up your Dropbox files on your portable hard drive. It felt like our 1TB model had acres of space to play with, which was especially useful in such a small package.

Unfortunately, you can only schedule one back-up at a time, so if you want your back-ups to operate automatically, you can't have both local and cloud back-ups running simultaneously. However, if you're willing to run them manually, you can still back up more than one device – you just have to run each job individually.

PRODUCT INFO

WD MY PASSPORT SLIM 1TB

www.westerndigital.com

Price: £119.99

SPECIFICATIONS

- USB3 (USB2 compatible)
- 5Gb/s quoted USB3 transfer rate
- 1TB capacity (2TB available later this year)
- 110 x 80 x 12.3mm
- 134g

FOR

- Small and sturdy construction
- Software provides good integration with Dropbox

AGAINST

- Back-up software only runs one automated back-up
- Other online storage services not supported

OUR VERDICT

★★★★☆

FEATURES	★★★★★
PERFORMANCE	★★★★★
EASE OF USE	★★★★☆
VALUE FOR MONEY	★★★★☆

This USB3 hard drive is small enough to fit in a shirt pocket and is well-protected in a solid case. It comes with a useful suite of additional software, including a back-up tool you can use to manage online storage as well as a range of external hard drives, including non-WD models. However, you can't set multiple automatic back-ups to work simultaneously.

The drive can also be encrypted for maximum security.

Discuss this review at forum.webuser.co.uk

WorldMags.net

GROUP TEST

We test and compare the latest products

Budget laptops

TESTED Webuser Labs

Andy Shaw looks at four bargain-priced laptops available for less than £400

Netbooks may have seen their sales eclipsed by tablets, but laptop manufacturers are mounting a renewed fight-back for our attention, with portable PCs running full versions of Windows 8 available at budget prices.

In this Group Test, we've reviewed four laptops that cost less than £400. They don't run the very latest technology and you might find the odd corner cut to keep costs down, but PCs at this price still manage to offer fantastic value for money.

HOW WE TESTED

The performance of the laptops was tested using our own Real World Benchmarks, which measure how well they run Windows software such as Microsoft Office, Adobe Photoshop and Apple iTunes. We also used a gaming benchmark running 3D action game Cyrsis, to see how well the PCs coped with running games. Battery life was tested by running a looping browsing simulation until the battery ran out of power, and we use a colorimeter to test the quality of the screen.

WEB USER AWARDS

Webuser GOLD AWARD — The best product/service in its category

Webuser SILVER AWARD — Good, but just misses out on top billing

Webuser BRONZE AWARD — Pretty good, but with some shortcomings

ACER ASPIRE S3 | £389.97 | www.saveonlaptops.co.uk

FEATURES ★★★★☆ PERFORMANCE ★★★★☆ EASE OF USE ★★★★☆ VALUE FOR MONEY ★★★★★

Webuser GOLD AWARD

When Ultrabooks first launched, prices were high, but a couple of years on that's no longer the case. At £390, the Acer Aspire S3 is amazing value for money.

On the outside, it's everything an Ultrabook should be. It has a slender aluminium body (just 18mm thick when closed) and is the lightest laptop in this Group Test by 800g. There are a surprising number of ports and sockets for such a slim case, with two USB3 ports, HDMI out and an SD card slot. It has a 13.3in screen with a resolution of 1,366 x 768 pixels.

The cost cutting has been done on the inside. The laptop is powered by a Sandy Bridge dual-core 1.4GHz Intel Core i3-2377M processor, which is about two generations old now, along with Intel's integrated HD Graphics 3000 chipset. It's backed-up with 4GB of memory, though, which helps raise its performance.

The Aspire S3 fared well in our benchmark tests, scoring 0.47 in our Real World Benchmarks, coming second only to the more powerful Aspire E1.

The low power has the benefit of conserving battery life, lasting six hours and 12 minutes in our test, though the Aspire E1 managed to squeeze 30 minutes more.

The S3's lack of an Ethernet port will disappoint those wanting to wire it to a home network, but the inclusion of dual-band 802.11n and Bluetooth 4 help make up for this.

The screen was the brightest in this test, with a score of 274cd/m². We were disappointed with the cramped keyboard, though, which has very small cursor keys, and the buttonless touchpad felt clunky to use.

VERDICT ★★★★☆

You can't have everything in a budget laptop, and the super-stylish Ultrabook design of the Acer Aspire S3 means it's had to cut corners with an internal specification that's a tad out of date. That said, it's powerful enough, coming second in our performance tests out of the four laptops reviewed here. It also has the brightest screen. The compact case is aesthetically pleasing, making the S3 look much more expensive than it is, and much lighter than the rest.

Discuss this review at forum.webuser.co.uk

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ACER ASPIRE E1 | £349.18

www.dabs.com

FEATURES ★★★☆☆ PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
EASE OF USE ★★★★☆ VALUE FOR MONEY ★★★★★

Webuser SILVER AWARD

If performance is more important to you than aesthetics, this Acer E1 may be a better bet than the S3. It contains an Ivy Bridge processor (a 2.5GHz Intel Core i5-3210M), with 4GB of memory and the Intel HD Graphics 4000 chipset. This combination gave it top ranking in our benchmarking tests for both Windows and gaming. Its power doesn't impact on the battery life, either, which lasted for six hours and 32 minutes in our light-use test.

The screen was second brightest behind the Aspire S3, with a maximum brightness of 226cd/m². However, there are no USB3 ports, it's only got single-band Wi-Fi and there's no Bluetooth. The keyboard is also cramped with keys that feel too bouncy.

VERDICT ★★★★☆

If we'd judged these laptops by performance above all else, the Aspire E1 would be this Group Test's top award-winner. However, we felt that the S3's performance was good enough, and its sleeker package and superior wireless options made it a slightly more attractive package than the E1.

HP COMPAQ CQ58 | £239.97

www.saveonlaptops.co.uk

FEATURES ★★★☆☆ PERFORMANCE ★★☆☆☆
EASE OF USE ★★★★☆ VALUE FOR MONEY ★★★★★

Webuser BRONZE AWARD

The HP is over £100 cheaper than the Acer laptops. It has a 15.6in screen with a resolution of 1,366 x 768 pixels, and although it's not as bright as the top two award-winners, it still manages a maximum brightness of 219cd/m². However, it only has Fast Ethernet (up to 100Mbps), single-band Wi-Fi and no USB3 ports.

Unlike the Acer laptops, we liked the HP's keyboard, which has a resistive springiness that makes typing comfortable.

The biggest problem is the laptop's performance. Its dual-core 1.4GHz AMD E1-1200 processor only managed a benchmark score of 0.27 in our Windows tests, and ran our games test at a jerky 18 frames per second (fps). In our light-use battery test, it ran for five hours and 24 minutes.

VERDICT ★★★★☆

While the performance of the HP Compaq CQ58 was disappointing in our tests, it's unfair to expect too much of a laptop with such a low price. It still has loads going for it and, although there's no state-of-the-art hardware, it's excellent value for money.

TOSHIBA SATELLITE C850D

£269.99 | www.pcworld.co.uk

FEATURES ★★★☆☆ PERFORMANCE ★★☆☆☆
EASE OF USE ★★★★☆ VALUE FOR MONEY ★★★★☆

The Toshiba Satellite C850D has many of the same components as the HP laptop, including the same processor, the same amount of memory (2GB) and storage (320GB), and the same size and resolution of screen (15.6in, 1,366 x 768 pixels). Despite these similarities, it fell behind the HP in our performance tests. The battery lasted only four hours and 35 minutes, nearly an hour less than the HP, and two hours less than the Aspire E1. It was slightly better at games, but still only produced a frame rate of 19fps. It came last in our Windows benchmark, with a score of 0.23.

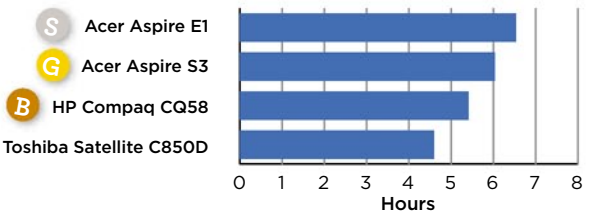
To its credit, it has a USB3 port alongside its two USB2 ports, but only single-band Wi-Fi and Fast Ethernet. It's not as good-looking as the Aspire S3, but its sturdy plastic case doesn't feel as cheap as its price tag might suggest.

VERDICT ★★★☆☆

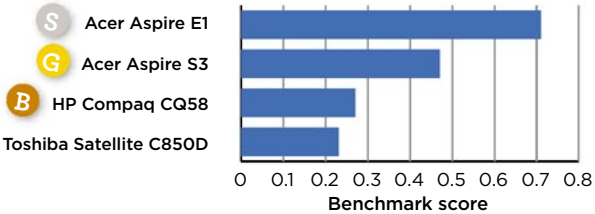
This is a great laptop for the price, but the Bronze Award-winning HP Compaq CQ58 is £30 cheaper and performed better. If you can afford it, spend £100 more on either of the two Acer laptops we've reviewed. You'll get much better performance and, with the S3, a better looking laptop, too.

TEST-RESULTS CHARTS

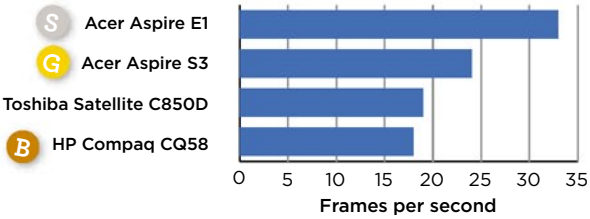
Light-use battery life



Real World Benchmarking



Gaming benchmarks



BUDGET LAPTOPS GROUP TEST

MANUFACTURER	Acer	Acer	HP	Toshiba
MODEL	Aspire S3	Aspire E1	Compaq CQ58	Satellite C850D
PRICE	£389.97	£349.18	£239.97	£269.99
WEBSITE	www.acer.co.uk	www.acer.co.uk	www.hp.com	www.toshiba.co.uk
SUPPLIER	www.saveonlaptops.co.uk	www.dabs.com	www.saveonlaptops.co.uk	www.pcworld.co.uk
PROCESSOR	1.4GHz Intel Core i3-2377M	2.5GHz Intel Core i5-3210M	1.4GHz AMD E1-1200	1.4GHz AMD E1-1200
MEMORY INSTALLED	4GB DDR3	4GB DDR3	2GB DDR3	2GB DDR3
SCREEN SIZE	13.3in glossy	15.6in glossy	15.6in glossy	15.6in glossy
RESOLUTION	1,366 x 768 pixels	1,366 x 768 pixels	1,366 x 768 pixels	1,366 x 768 pixels
GRAPHICS ADAPTER	Intel HD Graphics 3000	Intel HD Graphics 4000	AMD Radeon HD 7310M	AMD Radeon HD 7310M
GRAPHICS OUTPUTS	HDMI	D-SUB, HDMI	D-SUB, HDMI	D-SUB, HDMI
HARD DRIVE CAPACITY	500GB	500GB	320GB	320GB
OPTICAL DRIVE	None	DVD writer	DVD writer	DVD writer
WEBCAM	0.9 megapixels	0.9 megapixels	0.9 megapixels	1 megapixel
USB PORTS	2 x USB3	3 x USB2	3 x USB2	1 x USB3, 2 x USB2
WIRELESS NETWORKING	Dual-band 802.11n	Single-band 802.11n	Single-band 802.11n	Single-band 802.11n
WIRED NETWORKING	None	Gigabit Ethernet (10/100/1,000)	Fast Ethernet (10/100)	Fast Ethernet (10/100)
MEMORY-CARD READER	MMC, SD	MMC, SD	MMC, SD	MMC, SD
BLUETOOTH	Bluetooth 4	None	Bluetooth 2	None
OTHER PORTS	3.5mm audio output	3.5mm audio input, 3.5mm audio output	3.5mm audio input, 3.5mm audio output	3.5mm audio output
OPERATING SYSTEM	Windows 8 64-bit	Windows 8 64-bit	Windows 8 64-bit	Windows 8 64-bit
DIMENSIONS	323 x 219 x 18mm	381 x 252 x 33mm	378 x 247 x 32mm	380 x 242 x 34mm
WEIGHT	1.38kg	2.35kg	2.28kg	2.18kg
WARRANTY	1 year collect and return	1 year collect and return	1 year collect and return	1 year return to base
PART NUMBER	NX.M1FEK.006	NX.M09EK.002	D0X08EA#ABU	PSCC2E-00R00JEN

OUR VERDICT

It was a close-run thing between the Gold Award-winning Aspire S3 and the Silver Award-winning E1. Although the E1 performed better, we thought the S3 was a more interesting package, particularly because of its Ultrabook-style case. Its performance isn't far behind the E1 and we were smitten with its budget good looks. However, if you're looking for practical performance and don't mind missing out on head-turning design, you might prefer the E1.

The HP Compaq CQ58 is significantly cheaper than the Acer models, but didn't fare as well in our performance tests. However, if you're not able to stretch to the extra cost of the S3 or E1, it's a worthy Bronze Award-winner that's well worth the asking price.

Discuss this review at forum.webuser.co.uk

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SOFTWARE & SERVICES

ONLINE BACK-UP

SquirrelSave

£61 a year from www.squirrelsave.co.uk
Date tested: August 2013

With its unlimited storage, ability to handle back-ups from multiple PCs and external devices, and retention of old versions of your files, SquirrelSave is an excellent choice for backing up loads of data. It's very easy to use and great value for money.

KEY FEATURES
Automatic back-up ■ Unlimited storage ■ Recover deleted files for up to 32 days ■ 256-bit AES encryption ■ Back up any combination of files and folders ■ UK-based ■ Copies of files kept forever ■ Back-up logging

WEB DESIGN

Serif WebPlus X6

£81.69 from www.serif.com
Date tested: August 2013

Serif WebPlus X6 is a winning combination of ease of use, functionality and value for money. Its combination of tools, templates and flexibility, and the ease with which it lets you add extra features, make it an excellent choice for home users who want to create their own sites.

KEY FEATURES
30 templates ■ PayPal, Romancart, Mal's E-commerce payment systems ■ Social-media support ■ Allows hand-coded HTML ■ SEO tools ■ Widgets included ■ Graphics included ■ Overall site-structure view

ANTI-VIRUS

Kaspersky Internet Security

£24 (one year, three PCs) from www.amazon.co.uk
Date tested: July 2013

Kaspersky strikes the right balance between solid protection and a good understanding of what is safe and what is not. The software blocked 99 out of 100 threats and only reported one false positive. It's a powerful security tool to have watching over your PC.

KEY FEATURES
Firewall ■ Email scanning ■ Parental controls ■ Game mode ■ Personal data protection ■ Social-networking protection ■ Vulnerability scanner ■ 30-day free trial

WEB HOSTING

Go Daddy Deluxe

From £6.11 per month
from uk.godaddy.com
Date tested: May 2013

Go Daddy's set-up and configuration tools use a straightforward step-by-step process. The service has a generous range of features across all three of its hosting packages, particularly when you account for the price.

KEY FEATURES
Unlimited storage ■ Unlimited websites ■ Unlimited bandwidth ■ 25 databases ■ 500 email addresses ■ 100 sub-domains ■ £33.95 Facebook ad credit ■ 24/7 phone support ■ Customisable mobile site

PHOTO EDITING

Adobe Photoshop Elements 11

£64 from
www.amazon.co.uk
Date tested: December 2012

The eleventh version of Photoshop is a significant step forward. Other software may match it for features, but nothing else is this consistently elegant, responsive and enjoyable to use.

KEY FEATURES
Photo editing and management in one ■ Automated photo-cataloguing tools ■ Photomerge technology for panoramas and group shots ■ One-step shortcuts

VIDEO EDITING

Adobe Premiere Elements 11

£78.15 from
www.adobe.com/uk
Date tested: October 2012

It's easy to use, quick to master, and perfect for beginners, while having enough advanced tools to satisfy experts.

KEY FEATURES
Automatic editing ■ Image stabiliser ■ Export video as AVCHD, AVI, Flash, MOV, MPEG 2/4, WMV ■ Facebook/YouTube online formats ■ Surround-sound support ■ Disc-authoring for Blu-ray and DVD ■ Media library ■ 99 timelines ■ Stop-motion capture

All prices correct at time of review

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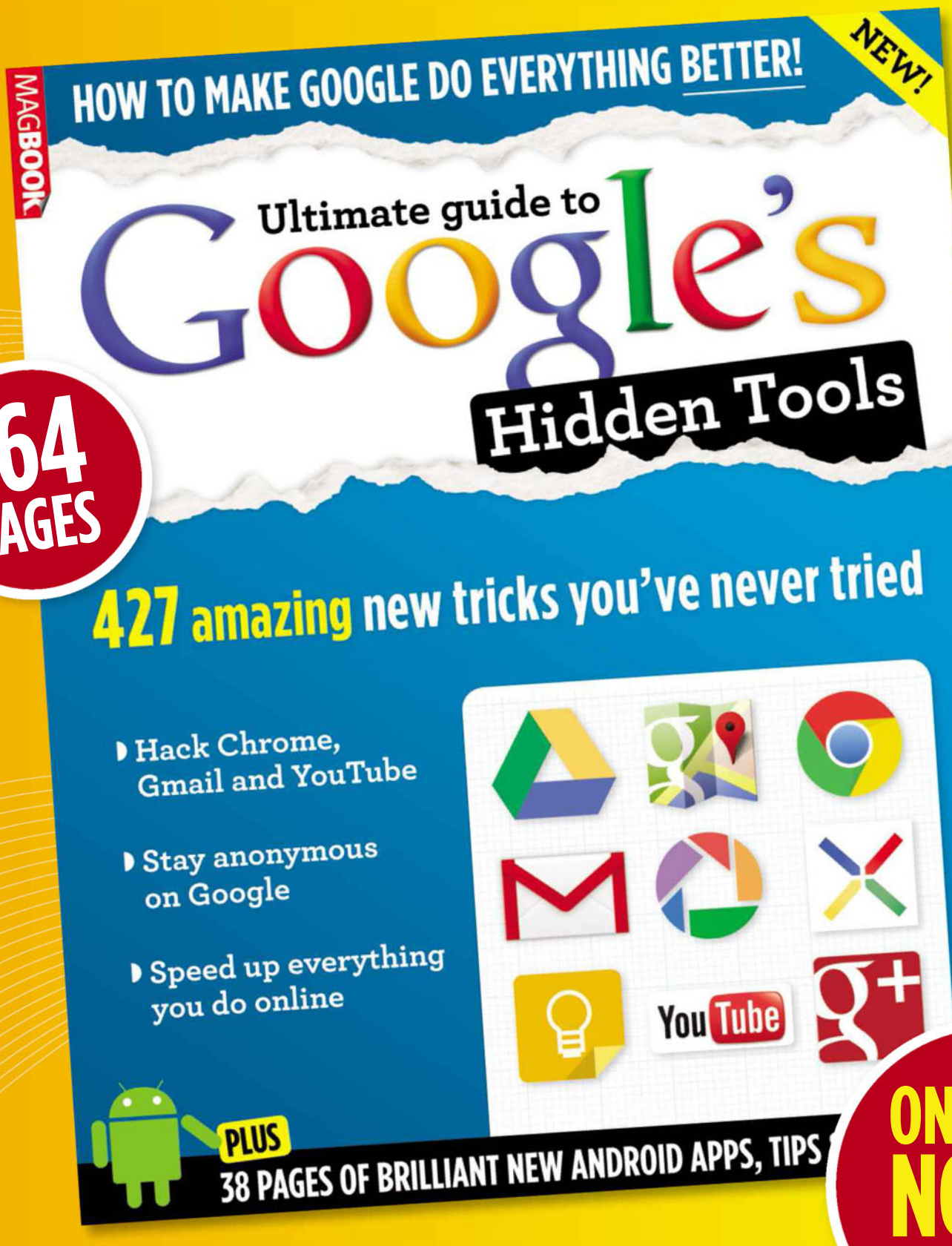

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HARDWARE

LAPTOP

NEW!

Acer Aspire S3

£390 from www.saveonlaptops.co.uk
Date tested: September 2013

The super-stylish Acer Aspire S3 looks far more expensive than it is. Although its internal specification is slightly out of date, its performance and battery life are impressive. It also has a clear, bright screen and a compact case, which makes it much lighter than most other laptops.

KEY SPECS
Windows 8 64-bit ■ 1.4GHz Intel Core i3-2377M processor ■ 4GB DDR3 memory ■ 13.3in screen ■ 1,366 x 768 pixels resolution ■ 500GB hard drive ■ 1.38kg ■ Dual-band 802.11n Wi-Fi ■ One-year warranty ■ 323 x 219 x 18mm

SMARTPHONE

HTC One

£480 SIM-free from www.htc.com/uk
Date tested: July 2013

The HTC One is a top-of-the-range smartphone with an excellent design. It works smoothly, is capable of taking impressive photos and features all the latest technologies for connecting it to Wi-Fi and mobile phone networks. It's also cheaper than the Samsung Galaxy S4.

KEY SPECS
4.7in screen ■ 1,920 x 1,080 pixels resolution ■ 1.7GHz quad-core processor ■ 2GB memory ■ 32/64 GB storage ■ 3G/4G/Wi-Fi ■ 4-megapixel camera ■ 137 x 68 x 9mm ■ 143g ■ Android 4.1.2

MI-FI DEVICE

EE Huawei E5776 Mobile Wifi

From **£12.99 per month** from ee.co.uk
Date tested: June 2013

The EE Mi-Fi device has a built-in screen that usefully displays the strength of your connection; tells you whether you're using 3G or 4G; and shows how many devices are connected via Wi-Fi. It isn't as cheap as rival devices, but its impressive speeds make it well worth paying for.

KEY SPECS
4G, 3G and 2G connectivity ■ 802.11b/g/n Wi-Fi ■ WPA security ■ 1.45in display ■ 10 hours battery life (500 hours standby) ■ 106 x 66 x 16mm ■ 149g

LAPTOP

Lenovo IdeaPad Z585

£499 from www.ebuyer.com
Date tested: June 2013

Lenovo IdeaPad Z585 has enough power to run Windows well, and far more graphical gaming power than we'd expect to see at this price. It also has a high-quality keyboard and four USB ports.

KEY SPECS
Windows 8 ■ 1.9GHz AMD A8-4500M processor ■ 8GB memory ■ 15.6in widescreen LCD ■ 1,366 x 768 pixels screen resolution ■ HDMI, VGA graphics outputs ■ 1TB hard drive ■ Ethernet and 802.11n Wi-Fi ■ 378 x 252 x 30mm ■ 2.7kg ■ One-year warranty

LASER PRINTER

Oki B401d

£67 from www.amazon.co.uk
Date tested: June 2013

The B401d is a fantastic all-round performer, delivering top-quality prints quickly, accurately and at a low cost per page. It's not particularly cheap, but it has good-value replaceable parts that will save you money in the long term. It's a large printer, so make sure you've got enough space to store it.

KEY SPECS
1,200 x 600 dpi resolution ■ 29 pages-per-minute print speed ■ 2.2p per A4 mono page ■ 250-sheet tray capacity ■ USB and parallel-port connections ■ 387 x 364 x 245mm

NETWORK SECURITY CAMERA

Y-cam HomeMonitor Indoor

£149.99 from www.amazon.co.uk
Date tested: May 2013

The Y-cam HomeMonitor Indoor is easy to set up, and you don't have to install any software on your PC or run mobile apps to get it working. Its ability to keep footage for you, remotely and securely, is worth paying extra for.

KEY SPECS
640 x 480 pixels resolution ■ 30 frames per second ■ Wi-Fi and Ethernet ■ Night vision ■ Microphone ■ 7-day online recording ■ Web-based camera management ■ Movement detection ■ Email alerts ■ 85 x 85 x 30mm

Get more tips in our newsletter at www.webuser.co.uk/newsletter
Like on Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/pages/Download-from-harks/124201754417002

MONITOR

BenQ BL2410PT

£197 from www.lambda-tek.com
Date tested: April 2013

This brilliant, versatile monitor has outstanding picture quality and useful features that reduce desktop clutter. Its 1,920 x 1,080 display is fully adjustable and can rotate through 90-degrees, so you can use it in portrait mode.

KEY SPECS
24in widescreen ■ 1,920 x 1,080 pixels resolution ■ 5,000:1 contrast ratio ■ 250cd/m² brightness ■ VGA, DisplayPort, HDMI and DVI ports ■ 23W power consumption ■ One-year return-to-base warranty ■ 6.7kg

INTERNET RADIO

Pure Sensia 200D Connect

£178.50 from www.amazon.co.uk
Date tested: April 2013

This internet radio connects with your network but doesn't have to go via your PC. The sound quality is excellent and there's a huge range of stations available through the Pure Connect service.

KEY SPECS
FM, DAB and internet radio ■ 5.7in screen ■ 802.11b/g Wi-Fi ■ WMA, AAC, MP3 and MP2 audio ■ Android and iOS apps ■ Remote control ■ 280 x 180 x 166mm ■ 1.9kg

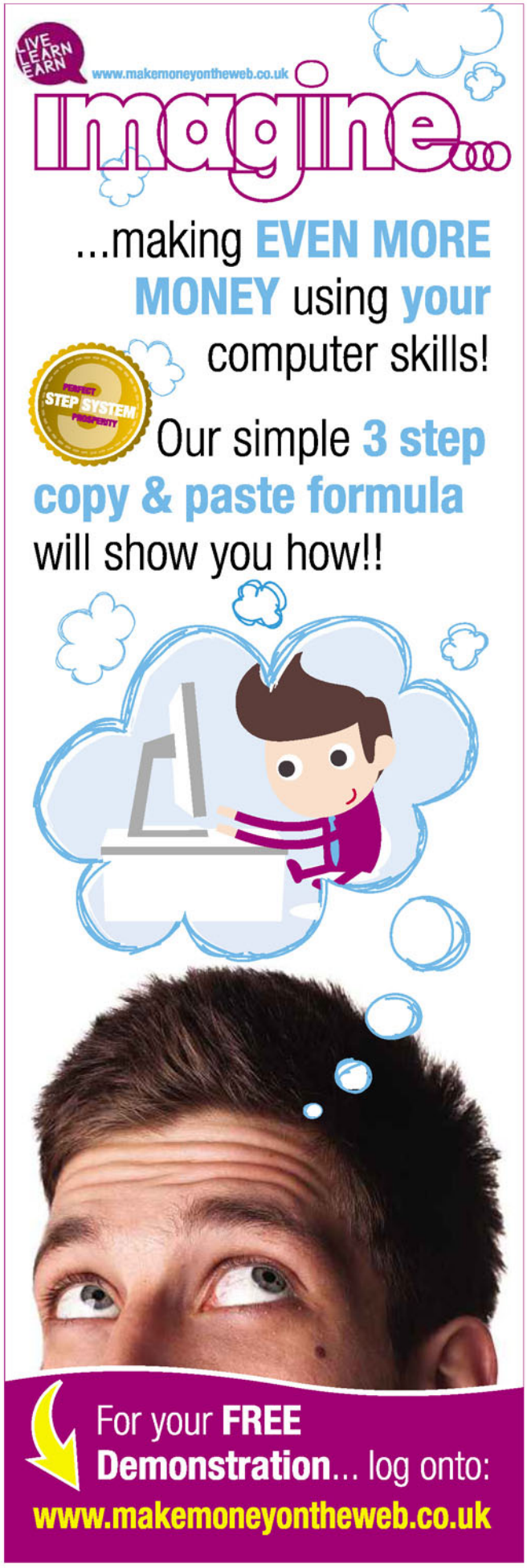
MEMORY KIT

Crucial Ballistix 8GB

£44 from www.ebuyer.com
Date tested: March 2013

This memory kit offers excellent performance for a good price. At £44 for two 4GB modules, the average cost is just £5.50 per gigabyte, which is impressively low for RAM with such a fast speed rating.

KEY SPECS
DDR3 RAM type ■ 8,192MB RAM size (2 x 4,096 modules) ■ 1,866MHz RAM speed ■ Lifetime warranty ■ Part code: BLE2CP4G3D1869DE1TX0CEU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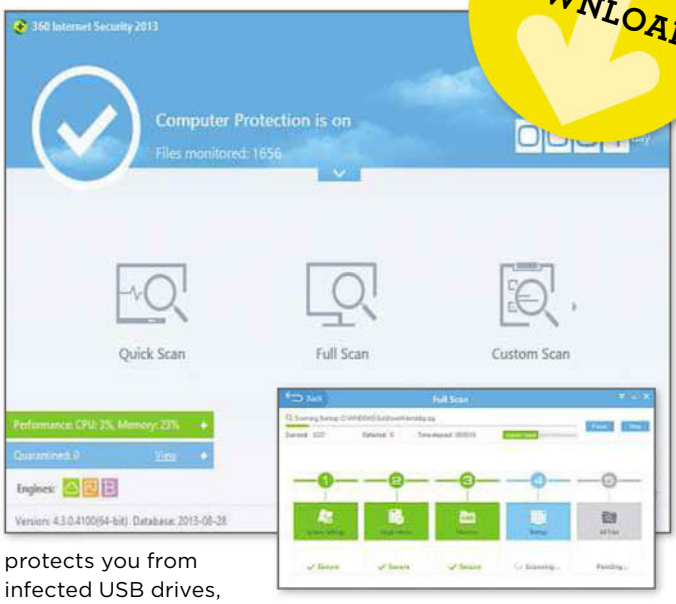
ANTI-VIRUS TOOL

360 Internet Security 2013

www.360safe.com

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8

File size: 189MB



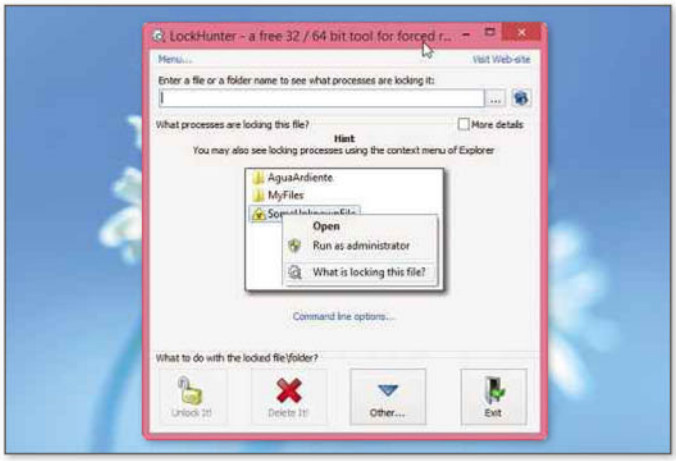
Few people would be happy entrusting their PC's security to a company they've never heard of, and the chances are that Qihoo 360 will be entirely unfamiliar to you. The firm does have a fair number of satisfied users however – some 450 million as of March 31, 2013. The reason you won't have encountered the company or 360 Internet Security before, is that Qihoo 360 is a Chinese firm, and this is its first foray into the English-speaking market.

This powerful security software comes with three anti-virus engines – 360 Cloud Engine, QVM II Engine and BitDefender – and offers real-time and on demand protection. The interface is very straightforward with large buttons that let you perform Quick, Full and Custom scans, and access other settings. It also tells you how many files it's monitoring and how long you've been running the software for.

When you run a quick or full scan, the program will check your system first, followed by your applications, memory, start-up and, finally, all your files. You can switch between highest speed and best performance, and pause or stop the scan at any time.

360 Internet Security also protects you from infected USB drives, blocks phishing websites and malicious URLs, monitors downloads, and prevents keyloggers and unauthorised webcam access.

The most recent update added a sandbox that can isolate programs from the system, improving security. Just drag a suspect application to the Sandbox interface to run it. There's also a new Cleaner component which removes all traces of browsing history and Windows and Office use.


LockHunter - a free 32 / 64 bit tool for forced r...
Enter a file or a folder name to see what processes are locking it:
What processes are locking this file?
More details
Hint
You may also see locking processes using the context menu of Explorer
AguaArdiente
MyFiles
Open
Run as administrator
What is locking this file?
What to do with the locked file\folder?
Unlock It!
Delete It!
Other...
Exit

FILE UNLOCKER

LockHunter 3

lockhunter.com

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8

File size: 2.9MB

It's usually pretty easy to delete files in Windows, but you'll occasionally encounter one that's been locked by the operating system. Whether a file won't delete because it's currently in use or is malware, LockHunter can solve the problem by forcibly removing it. The latest release (which is still in beta) can delete files when you restart your PC, provide more information about them and automatically check for upgrades. It also offers support for multi-monitor set-ups.

GAME

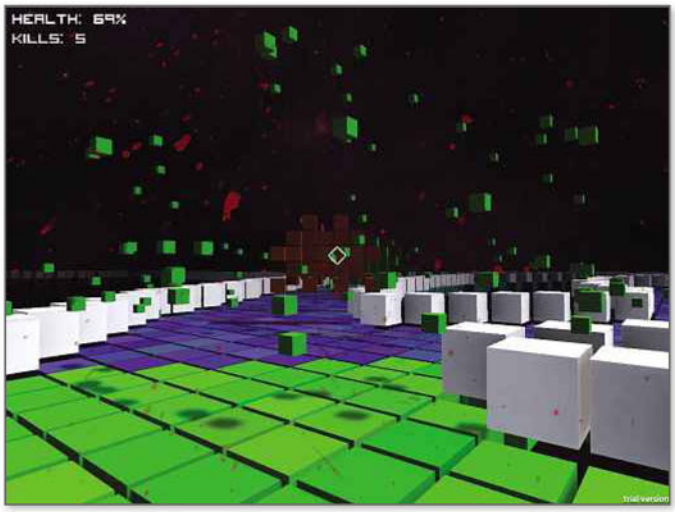
Galaxel

bit.ly/galaxel327

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8, Mac OS X

File size: 14.4MB

In this fun first-person game, you kill incoming enemies by picking up blocks from under your feet and hurling them. One hit is all it takes, but there's a twist. Each enemy can only be killed with a block that's the same colour as themselves. Rip up too many blocks, and you risk falling through the gap you've created.



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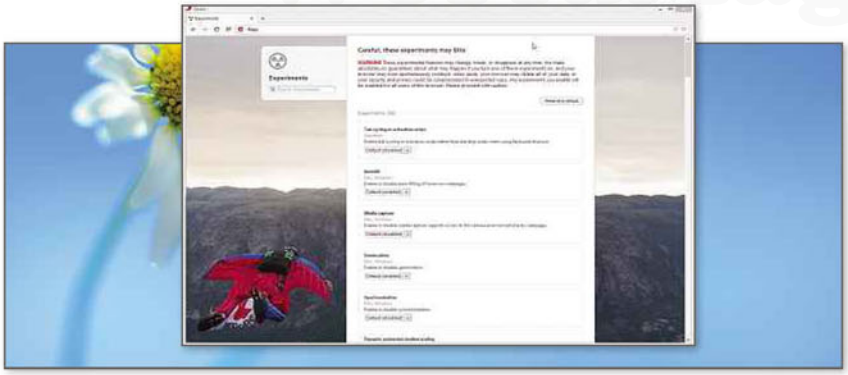


BROWSER

Opera 16

www.opera.com

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8 or Mac OS X **File size:** 30.6MB

Quickly following Opera 15, which was a major departure for the browser and the first to use Chrome's rendering engine, this update fixes a lot of bugs and improves overall performance. It updates the engine to Chromium 29 and adds 'opera:flags', which gives adventurous users access to experimental features such as auto-filling of forms on web pages, geolocation and synchronisation. The update also supports jump-lists on Windows and presentation mode on Mac.

DATA-DELETION TOOL

HDShredder 4 Free

bit.ly/hdshred327

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8 **File size:** 11.6MB

Before selling or disposing of an old hard drive, it's vital you securely delete the data on it to prevent it from falling into the wrong hands. HDShredder can clear entire hard drives, and the latest version adds support for Windows 8/Server 2012. It can now erase USB 3.0 drives and memory sticks, too.

COMPETITION

WIN 1 OF 4 COPIES!

Serif PagePlus X7

Available to buy now priced £81.69, Serif's PagePlus X7 is ideal for small businesses, charities and clubs looking for an affordable office suite to help create professional promotional materials. This latest version has a new Startup Assistant for instant access to tutorials and a quick search for templates and document types. PagePlus X7's clean, efficient interface also offers docking controls to personalise the screen layout.

To enter, email your address to webusercomp@dennis.co.uk with 'pageplus' in the subject line. For more information, visit www.serif.com.

NEW WINDOWS 8 APPS

SuperHeroes Stuff

bit.ly/superheroes327

Min requirements: Windows 8

File size: 25.1MB

This app has all kinds of info on popular superheroes, including Spiderman, Superman, Batman, Iron Man and Captain America, providing details about their movies, cartoons, comic books and more.

Kirstie's Fill Your House For Free

bit.ly/FYHFF327

Min requirements: Windows 8

File size: 1.65MB

Based on the Channel 4 TV show presented by Kirstie Allsopp, this app suggests ways to renovate your home on a shoestring budget. There are behind-the-scenes videos, meet-the-expert clips and free house tips.

Disney Infinity: Action!

bit.ly/disneyinfinity327

Min requirements: Windows 8

File size: 686MB

Use this app to create your own movies starring Mr Incredible (from *The Incredibles*), Sulley (from *Monsters Inc*), Captain Jack Sparrow (from *Pirates of the Caribbean*) and yourself (or your kids).

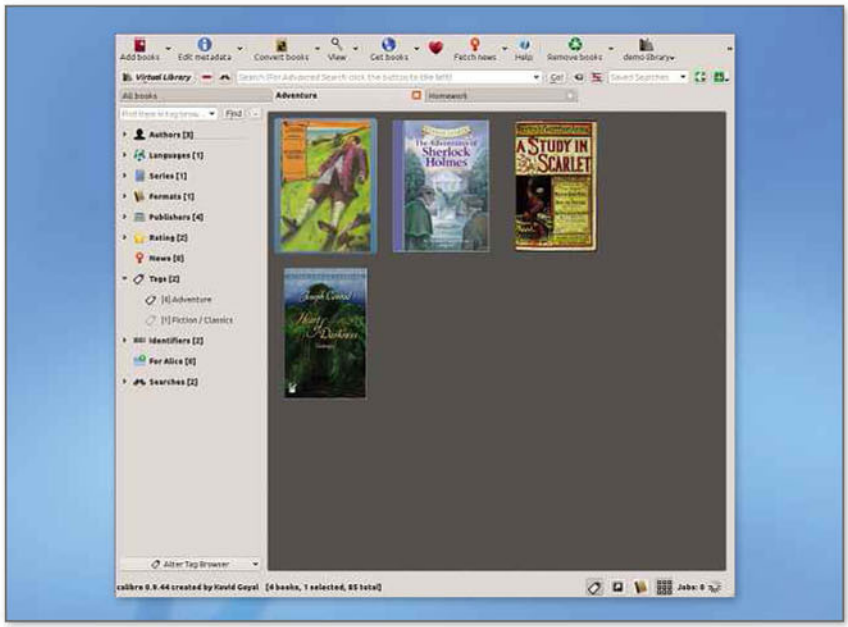
WorldMags.net

EBOOK MANAGER

Calibre

calibre-ebook.com

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8, Mac OS X or Linux **File size:** 49.9MB



Although it was first released seven years ago, it's taken until now for this popular ebook manager to reach version 1.0. As you'd expect, this milestone edition of Calibre offers some major new features, including a 'cover grid' view of books, a faster, more robust database, the option to organise your library into smaller virtual libraries, the ability to convert Word documents, full support for font embedding and a rewritten PDF-output engine. The software can also perform various automated clean-up actions on your ebooks, including embedding fonts, smartening punctuation and making improvements to the look of the book's cover.

SYSTEM REPAIR

Avira Rescue System

bit.ly/aviraresc ue327

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8 or Linux **File size:** 588MB

Most malware infections can be dealt with from within Windows, but if your PC is so badly infected that it won't even boot, you'll need a stronger solution. Avira Rescue System can be burned to a CD or copied to a USB memory stick and booted from. The program has a wizard that checks for infections and repairs any damage. There are also tools for repairing the Windows Registry, and an option to establish a remote Desktop connection with Avira Support, if you need further help.

Rescue System is available as both an ISO disc image and an EXE file with a CD burner included.

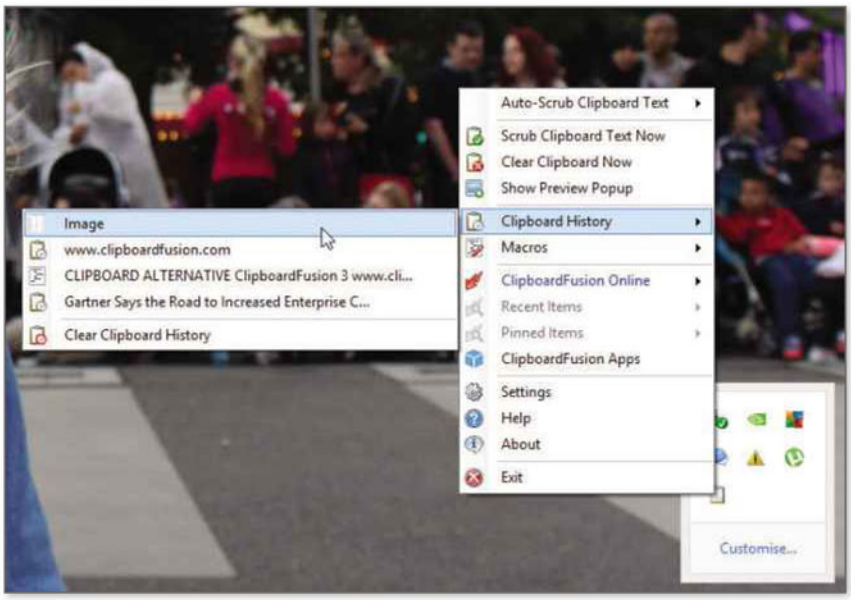
CLIPBOARD ALTERNATIVE

ClipboardFusion 3

www.clipboardfusion.com

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8

File size: 1.4MB



The Windows clipboard is a useful if unexciting part of the operating system. ClipboardFusion is a supercharged feature-packed replacement that can store multiple items in the clipboard (from 20, by default, up to 300), remove formatting from copied text and strip out HTML tags and preview images.

Upgrade to the Pro version for £6.75 (£4.35) and you can store all copied text on ClipboardFusion Online and sync the contents with other computers. The latest version comes with a wide range of improvements and bug fixes, and you also get a 30-day free trial of the paid-for edition.

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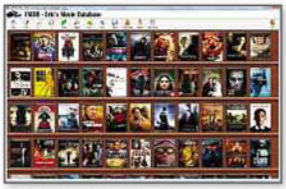
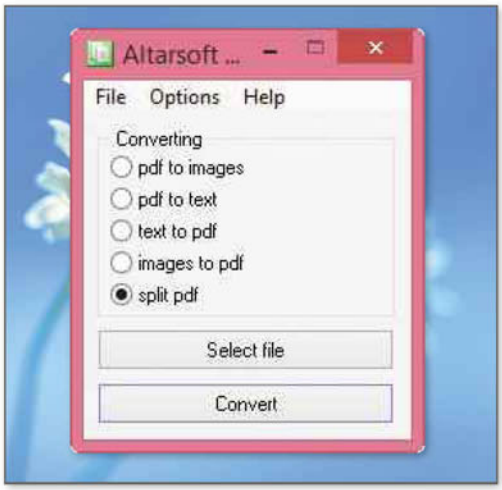
Like on Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/pages/Download-from-harks/124201754417002

READER RECOMMENDS



I recently discovered a great free program for managing my DVD collection. It's called Eric's Movie Database (www.emdb.tk), and all you need to do is enter the title of a film to import information about it along with a cover image from the web. You can add your own ratings and even track when you've lent someone a DVD. Brilliant!

John Earlsfield, via email



PDF TOOL

Altarsoft PDF Converter

bit.ly/altarsoftpdf327

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8
File size: 961KB

This very simple conversion tool can save a PDF in a range of image formats or as a text file. It can also split a large file into individual pages, and convert text or images to PDF. Be sure to decline all the bundled software during installation.

GAME

Vulpine 101

bit.ly/vulpine327

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8, Mac OS X or Linux **File size:** 60.7MB

If you've ever wondered what it's like to be a fox, you can find out in this simple 3D game. The aim is to stay alive by killing and eating other animals, including rabbits, bears and other foxes. You can sneak up on them, or charge in blindly. You also have the ability to howl!

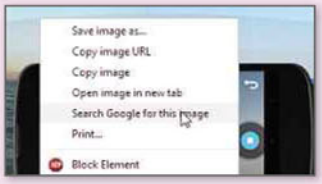
UPDATED | New tweaks and fixes for your favourite programs

BROWSER

Chrome 30 beta

bit.ly/chromebeta327

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8, Mac OS X or Linux **File size:** 32.9MB



The most notable new feature in Chrome is the handy option to right-click a picture on a web page and choose 'Search Google for this image'. This will run a search through Google Images to identify the subject and source of the picture, and let you view different sizes.

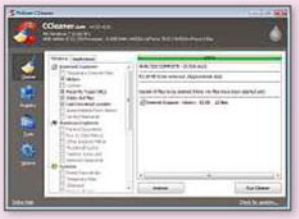
MEDIA PLAYER

GOM Player 2.2.53.5169

www.gomlab.com

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8
File size: 12.2MB

This powerful media player has been updated with several new features. These include a bookmark manager, a playback status icon that now appears on your taskbar and, best of all, the ability to boost the volume 200 per cent. Just drag the slider to the max and keep going!



CLEAN-UP TOOL

CCleaner 4.05

www.piriform.com/ccleaner

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8
File size: 4.2MB

The latest CCleaner update adds the ability to clean Windows Event logs; enhances the Intelligent Cookie Scan feature; and improves cleaning of QuickTime and Foxit Phantom PDF. It also makes the program more efficient at removing System Restore points.

FILE-SHARING TOOL

uTorrent 3.3.2 Beta 30067

www.utorrent.com

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8
File size: 1.1MB

This most recent beta release of this popular BitTorrent client has fixed several bugs, including the program crashing on start-up, not working properly in Windows XP and freezing when you tried to delete torrents.
Be sure to decline the extra options during installation.

VIDEO CONVERTER

Freemake Video Converter 4.0.4.0

www.freemake.com

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8
File size: 30MB

This update to Freemake's versatile video converter adds an automatic update mechanism for YouTube Vevo videos, and fixes problems with syncing audio and converting DVDs and Blu-rays when specific options are turned on. It also makes the program more stable to use.

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BEST FREE APPS

This fortnight's top FREE smartphone and tablet apps

TRAVEL

UK Travel Guide With Me

bit.ly/guide327

Min requirements: Android 2.3

Size: 208MB

This offline travel app is the only companion you'll need on your next day trip or UK tour. Get info on your current location; browse a huge list of UK towns, cities and travel ideas; or search a database of locations from Acton to Zennor (London and Cornwall, in case you wondered).

Once you've picked a location, you can dive into a wealth of local information, including transport and accommodation guides, health and safety advice, spending tips and traffic information.

One of the app's best features is its integration with the offline app Maps With Me (bit.ly/maps327), which you can download separately or access by tapping a destination's map icon. The map is annotated with tips, and you can add bookmarks and other customisations. The travel guides and maps can be used in offline mode to save on data and roaming charges, or when you can't get a connection.

SYNC

BitTorrent Sync

bit.ly/bitsync327

Min requirements: Android (varies with device), iOS 5

Size: 2.5MB

On page 52, we reveal some excellent legal uses for file-sharing service BitTorrent, and here's another: a free app that lets you sync unlimited files and folders across all your devices, without storing your information in the cloud. Features include mobile-to-mobile sharing; automatic back-up of photos on your mobile to your PC; and fully encrypted file transfer.

EATING OUT

Toptable

bit.ly/table327

Min requirements: Android 2.3.3

Size: 2.6MB

Toptable's updated Android app helps you discover restaurants from a pool of more than 4,000 places to eat in the UK, and lets you instantly find available tables, check the menu, read reviews and make bookings. You can search by location (list or map), date, time and party size, and refine your results with filters including star ratings, food type and special offers.

TOOLS

Toucher Pro

bit.ly/toucher327

Min requirements: Android 2.1

Size: 1.7MB

The latest release from GO Launcher team is a time-saving widget that gives you one-tap access to your most-used apps and functions. There are shortcuts to 19 system switches including Wi-Fi and mobile data, and you can create your own. The look of the app is down to you, with lots of themes to choose from. Despite the 'Pro' in the name, all features are free.

DOCUMENTS

Quip

bit.ly/quip327

Min requirements: Android (varies with device), iOS 6

Size: 9.9MB

Press Release
Cafe Ria has been committed to the highest quality espresso, cappuccino,
Does that work for you two?
This looks good - excited for the announcement tomorrow

Most word-processor apps are pared-down versions of PC software, but Quip was designed for use on the go. Documents and related texts are organised into threads for easy collaboration, and pages are auto-formatted for your screen size. The Android version is a preview but the iOS version (bit.ly/iquip327) is a full release. Find out more at quip.com.

QR codes

UK Travel Guide With Me

BitTorrent Sync

Toptable

Toucher Pro

Quip

WorldMags.net
Like on Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/pages/Download-from-harks/124201754417002

ALARM

Timely

bit.ly/timely327

Min requirements: Android 4.0.3

Size: 9.4MB

The Smart Rise tool on this stunning alarm clock claims to make waking up "a beautiful experience", but if you find it's too gentle, there are plenty of noisier options. You can add challenges, such as pressing multiple buttons before the alarm stops, or sync alarms across devices and to have them blare at you from all corners of the room. Choose from the gorgeous default clock faces or design your own.

GAME

Deal Or No Deal

bit.ly/deal327

Min requirements: Android 1.5

Size: 3.6MB

Compete against yourself or other users for kudos rather than cash in this unofficial new game. It doesn't quite have the panache of the Deal Or No Deal TV show, but it's very popular on Google Play and could come in handy on long journeys. The rules are the same: pick a box (well, briefcase), eliminate the other boxes and accept or decline the banker's deals.

SECURITY

ESET Mobile Security and Anti-Virus

bit.ly/security327

Min requirements: Android (varies with device)

Size: 6MB

This new version of ESET's highly-regarded anti-virus and anti-malware app claims a detection rate of 99.7 per cent. Along with established features, such as real-time malware screening, this version adds background and scheduled scan options, phishing protection, text and call filtering and an 'apps audit' to monitor permissions of your installed apps.

PHOTOS

Photofeed

bit.ly/photofeed327

Min requirements: Android 2.3

Size: 4.5MB

The world probably doesn't need another photo store/sync/share app, but this superb addition to the genre deserves a look. It finds all your photos on all your devices and drives, organises them intelligently in one secure place, encrypts and backs them up automatically and gives you private access from anywhere. Free for up to 1,000 photos; see www.photofeed.com for premium plans.

QR codes

Timely

Deal Or No Deal

Mobile Security and Anti-Virus

Photofeed

5 NEW APPS WORTH PAYING FOR

READING

Syllable

bit.ly/syllable327

Min requirements: iOS 6.1

Size: 1MB **Price:** 69p

This app helps you learn to read faster by reducing your "subvocalisation", where you silently say the words you're reading. It can be linked to your Pocket and Instapaper articles to help you learn a useful lifelong skill.

QUIZ

Quiz Harry Potter Pro

bit.ly/harry327

Min requirements: Android 2.2

Size: 11MB **Price:** 99p

Find out whether you're a true Harry Potter fan by challenging yourself to answer more than 300 quiz questions about the books and films. You can save your current game to continue later.

TOOLS

Thermometer

bit.ly/therm327

Min requirements: Android 4

Size: 651KB **Price:** 69p

This app is a minimalist but beautiful thermometer and weather forecaster that represents the temperature in colours as well as numbers.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Tadaa 3D

bit.ly/tadaa327

Min requirements: iOS 6

Size: 14.9MB **Price:** £2.49

Tadaa's free HD camera app (bit.ly/tadaacam327) is an all-time iOS favourite, so hopes are high for this companion app that lets you create "3D" photos and animations that seem to jump out of the screen as you move it around.

SHOPPING

Check Car Value

bit.ly/carvalue327

Min requirements: Android 2.2

Size: 1.1MB **Price:** £2.99

Before you sell or buy a second-hand car, use this app to get an accurate market valuation that takes into consideration make, model and depreciation. It's not just a tool for shopping around – it also means that you're less likely to be conned by a salesman.

BEST NEW ADD-ONS

This fortnight's 10 most useful tools for your browser

CHROME

OverTask

bit.ly/over327

OverTask turns Chrome's New Tab page into a colourful task manager, to help you remember the things you need to do. Add as many tasks as you want, sort them into categories and set their priority. You can then mark them as complete or delete them when they're done.

JustDelete.me

bit.ly/just327

JustDelete.me makes it easy to delete your accounts with online services. When you're visiting a site, it displays an icon in your address bar that indicates how difficult it is to remove your details. Click this icon to be taken to the page that lets you delete your account (if possible).

TabInfoCopy

bit.ly/tabinfo327

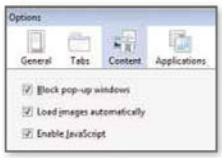
This add-on makes it easy to share the name and URL of a website. Just click its icon in the address bar to copy the title and address of the current tab, or double-click to copy details from all open tabs. You can then paste the info into a document, email or social-networking post.

Comments for Cats

bit.ly/cats327

If you love cats, but you hate obnoxious comments on web pages, this is the perfect add-on for you. It replaces the comments on websites including YouTube and Buzzfeed with photos of cute moggies. Sadly, you can't add more sites to the list, but you can suggest options to include.

FIREFOX



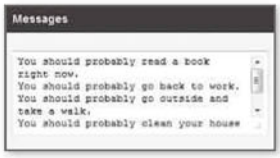
SettingSanity

bit.ly/setting327

You may have noticed that recent releases of Firefox removed some of the browser's advanced settings from the Options box. This add-on restores some of the most useful ones, including options to block images, turn off JavaScript and hide the Tab bar.

You Should Probably

bit.ly/youshould327


Messages
You should probably read a book right now.
You should probably go back to work.
You should probably go outside and take a walk.
You should probably clean your house

This add-on tells you when you've spent too long on a particular website, by displaying a gentle warning in your browser. Click the clock icon on your status bar to enter the URL of a time-wasting site and the message to show, such as: "You should probably get back to work".

Hugo

bit.ly/hugo327

Hugo expands Firefox's Find function to let you search across all your open tabs. Just press Ctrl+F and click the Hugo button to open a side panel of extra search options. Enter your query, and you can choose to exclude specific tabs, websites and words from the results.

Amazon – Search Highlighted Text

bit.ly/amazon327

If you read about a product you'd like to buy on a web page, you can use this add-on to look it up instantly on Amazon. Just highlight the name, right-click and choose 'Search on Amazon'. Go into the add-on's Options to change its default setting to Amazon UK.

OPERA

Search in YouTube

bit.ly/youtube327

This add-on saves you the time and effort of having to copy and paste the name of a person, song or anything else from a web page to YouTube. Just select and right-click some text, choose 'Search in YouTube' and matching results from the video site will open in a new tab.

Scroll to Top

bit.ly/scroll327

Take the strain off your fingers when scrolling through long pages by installing this add-on. It places a large arrow icon in the bottom-right corner of your browser that you can click to go straight to the top or foot of a page. Click the double arrows to move through the page one section at a time.

Tell us your favourite add-ons at www.facebook.com/webusermagazine

Like on Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/pages/Download-from-harks/124201754417002

INBOX
Share your views!

CONTACT US
You can let us know your views and opinions via **webuser@dennis.co.uk**, **www.facebook.com/webusermagazine**, **www.twitter.com/webusermagazine** and **forum.webuser.co.uk**

STAR EMAIL

£25 winner

Some free trials can cost you dearly

Like Chris King, whose letter you published in Issue 326 (bit.ly/webuser326), I resent having to enter my card details when I sign up for a free trial online. It's especially frustrating when websites make it difficult for you to cancel once the trial is up, having made it super-easy for you to join.

I once registered with a certain credit-reference agency – I won't name them, but other readers may be able to guess - to check my credit score before I applied for a loan. I had no need to continue my membership once the 30-day trial had finished (in fact, I didn't need it for more than a day), but the only way to cancel was to phone the customer service department. I then had to argue with the person at the other end for almost half an hour to persuade them to let me leave without being charged.

Once these firms have your card details, they basically have you over a barrel, and will do everything in their power to keep you on after the trial has finished. Sometimes, this involves being committed to a contract for another 12 months, with money taken from your account automatically.

Obviously, there are commercial incentives for them to trick you into a trial that's hard to cancel, and you could even say that 30 days of free service is pretty generous. There are also a few websites, such as Netflix (www.netflix.com), that give you clear options to cancel, rather than making you jump through hoops.

On the whole, though, I would advise anyone thinking of signing up for a free trial to read the small print carefully, and not to hand over card details unless there's a clear exit route. Otherwise, what at first seemed like a great bargain could end up costing you a packet.

John Francis, via email

Why I don't miss dreadful dial-up

I doubt many people will be shedding a tear over the death of dial-up, as reported in your 5 September issue. Like many others, my first experience of the web was using a 56k modem (and an AOL disc, I'm embarrassed to admit), and all I can say is: thank God things have moved on!

I certainly don't miss watching pages slowly appear on-screen, only to freeze halfway, or waiting half an hour for an email to come through because some thoughtless person had attached a large photo to it. Nor do I miss the awful noise the modem made as it was dialling the internet, or the fact that you couldn't use the phone while online.

Anyone who started using the web after 2005 doesn't know how lucky they are. I wish I'd had access to Wi-Fi, 3G and a 30Mbps connection when I was a net newbie! Believe me, dreadful old dial-up is better off dead.

Stephen McAldry, via email

No hope in Hull of switching broadband

I read with a degree of mirth your article in Issue 325 (bit.ly/webuser325), regarding Ofcom's determination to make changing your broadband provider easier. If you live where I live, changing provider is not just difficult, it's impossible! I live in Hull, and, if you live here you have no choice at all about who provides your broadband - it's KC (Kingston Communications) or nothing.

I understand this situation was once brought to the notice of Ofcom and they did look into this monopoly, but were told by KC that any broadband provider was welcome to offer its services in Hull. However, KC owns the infrastructure in this city and, allegedly, the fees they quoted to other providers for use of their network were so high that no-one could make a profit and so declined to serve the residents of Hull. So, it's KC or nothing in Hull, yet residents of Warne, just three miles away and on the BT network, can use any service they wish!

Now, I am not complaining about KC's service – it's not the best or the cheapest but it's probably not the worst either. But it would be nice to have the opportunity to find this out for myself.

I would suggest that Ofcom would be better employed giving us residents of Hull any chance at all to change rather than improving a service already available to everyone else in the country.

Pete Hogg, via email

Please don't bring Wi-Fi to planes

Your Instant Expert about on-board Wi-Fi in Issue 326 instilled me with terror. Not because I'm afraid that someone might bring down a plane using their iPad, but because flights are often annoying enough without extra noise pollution plaguing our ears. It's bad enough when you have to put up with crying babies and sound-leaking earphones, without the inane chatter of idiots on their mobile phones.

You can just imagine it: "I'm on the plane! We've just taken off. Now we're up in the sky! I can see the clouds. Only four hours until we land". And so on, until you just want to grab a parachute and hope for the best. Many train journeys are now

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ruined by passengers who blatantly ignore the 'quiet coach' signs. On a plane, you won't have any choice but to listen to them. Please let us have some peace when we're on long and often uncomfortable flights, and leave Wi-Fi on the ground.

Jeremy Masters, via email

We shouldn't complain about free apps

I found your 'Great websites with rubbish apps' feature (Issue 326) to be rather uncharitable. Companies are under no obligation to provide mobile apps as well as full websites, and they often cost a lot to develop. The fact that the majority of apps are free means there's little profit to be made from them, so why should time and money be invested in making them work perfectly on every device?

It seems churlish to complain that something we're getting for free isn't perfect. If you don't like an app, then don't use it – there are plenty of alternatives out there. In my opinion, the only grounds we have to criticise a free app are that it compromises your phone's security. To say that an app is "rubbish", just because it's a bit slow or lacks a particular feature, is small-minded and ungracious.

Darren Boyes, via email

Whatever happened to eBay?

I remember the good old days when eBay was an exciting auction site where you could snap up all sorts of brilliant bargains if you played the game well. By that, I mean watching auctions carefully, picking the best time to place that winning bid and, just as importantly, knowing when to stop. These days, it's really just a shop and, because most of the items are 'Buy it now', you don't find the great deals you used to.

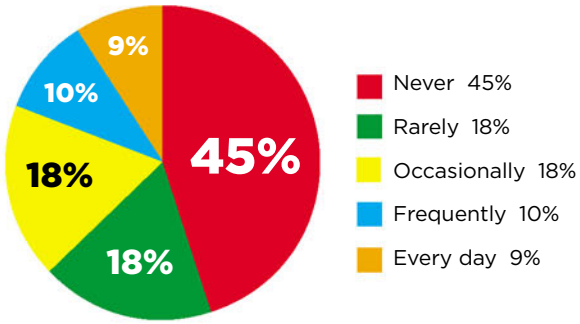
If you sell anything, eBay takes a massive chunk of your money, and you have to compete with dodgy sellers from Hong Kong. Also, I still don't like that new logo. I know eBay isn't going to change back to how it used be, but I just wanted to share my tuppence worth.

Brian Atkinson, via email

Your Vote Counts

ON WEBUSER.CO.UK THIS FORTNIGHT WE ASKED...

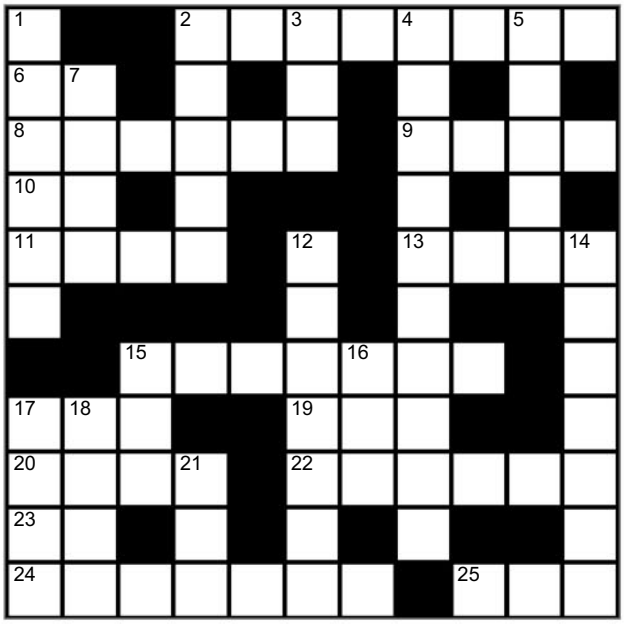
How often do you use Skype?



NEXT FORTNIGHT...
How long have you owned your current phone?
Vote online at www.webuser.co.uk

THIS FORTNIGHT'S CROSSWORD

Clues marked with an asterisk are cryptic and refer to sites and software featured in this issue of *Web User*. All other clues are literal. Answers online at www.webuser.co.uk/crossword



ACROSS

2. *Obvious request for turning Chrome's New Tab page onto a task manager (8)
6. (with 21 down) *I* __ ___ *Walrus*, 1967 Beatles song (2,3)
8. Berners Lee and 3 down produces alarm clock app (6)
9. Nigel Farage's political organisation (4)
10. (With 21 and 7 down) All __ ___ _____. Imaginary (2,3,4)
11. Norse god of war (4)
13. *Cuddle old expansion for Firefox Find (4)
15. *Calcium-free French ebook software (7)
17. Novel by Henry Rider Haggard (3)
19. Sharp little bite (3)
20. High-street and online shop selling clothes and home products (4)
22. *(With 1 down) Ten animators constructed site for storing and sharing photos and videos (6,6)
23. Chemical symbol for argon (2) **24.** Capital of Sicily (7)
25. Cheadle, McLean or Draper (3)

DOWN

1. See 22 across
2. *Explode once inside cinema site (5)
3. Cathedral city in Cambridgeshire (3)
4. *Procure hot soup for app creating one-tap shortcuts (10)
5. See 21 down **7.** See 10 across
12. *Fruity spread holds headless pennies for cashback site (7)
14. Turkish empire (7)
15. *Economic exchange harbours trading site (3)
16. 8th of a byte (3)
17. Children's card game (4)
18. Greek goddess, sister and wife of Zeus (4)
21. (With 5 down) 1973 film starring Paul Newman and Redford (3,5)

Crossword created using Crossword Compiler software, from WordWeb Software (www.wordwebsoftware.com).

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Like on Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/pages/Download-from-harks/124201754417002

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What you say...

ARE YOU EXCITED BY OFCOM'S PROPOSALS FOR SUPER-FAST WI-FI ON PLANES, BOATS AND TRAINS?

No, because sometimes it's nice to be able to say, 'Sorry, no connection', then have some chill-out time.

Claire-Louise Devon

I'll reserve my excitement until I see the price of accessing it.

Chris Armstrong

It'll be used by stupid people updating Facebook mid-air with pointless comments.

Andrew Clennell

Would be nice to have super-fast broadband in my house first. 3.3Mbps is the best I've ever had.

Joanne Evans

YOU CAN NOW BUY THE NEW NEXUS 7 TABLET (bit.ly/nexus327). IS IT ON YOUR SHOPPING LIST?

I already own a Kindle 3 and the original Nexus 7, so I can't justify the purchase.

Andrew Emmett

Bought mine from Tesco Direct and awaiting delivery. No need for 3G as I have 4G with EE on my phone, which I can just tether.

Stuart A Hordern

I had a play a few weeks ago, and was impressed, but not enough to upgrade. I've got the original Nexus 7, and apart from the better display and camera, there's not much reason to upgrade.

Purav

I'll get rid of my third-generation iPad if the screen on the new Nexus 7 is as good as people say it is. Do I need it? Not really. What will I use it for? YouTube and email mostly. Will I get one? Google - take my money now!

Derek Murray

DO YOU MIND THAT FACEBOOK PASSED ON THE DETAILS OF OVER 2,300 USERS TO THE UK GOVERNMENT (bit.ly/fb327)?

Welcome to 1984 in 2013. This country is getting more like North Korea every day. It's their way of snooping on us.

Phil Graham

I don't care if the government knows everything about me. I have nothing to hide. I'm more worried about the people who are concerned about this. There is no privacy online - learn this and you'll be fine.

Stephen Perry

If Facebook passed my details on to the government, I wouldn't be too happy about it. I care about my privacy. They should ask permission first.

Gwyn Griffiths

Not really. They pass on everyone's details to the NSA every day.

Matt Hawkins

DO YOU NOW WATCH MORE TV ON YOUR PHONE, TABLET AND LAPTOP THAN ON YOUR TV SET?

I only use a PC and tablet. I don't even own a TV anymore.

Luke Handy

I would say I watch as much if not more on my iPad. Although I don't watch a great deal of TV.

Emmy UpTo-NoGood

I don't watch live TV anymore. I watch everything on my laptop or streamed to the TV via my laptop.

George McPhail

No, I still watch more TV on my big TV (there's no comparison), but I have watched TV episodes from Blinkbox on my widescreen laptop!

Lynn Sharpe

My web connection is too slow for internet TV.

Paul Wallace

Nearly always on TV. That's what they are for! Once in a while I catch up on the computer (24in screen), but never on a phone.

Stephen Burns

YOUR ONLINE RIGHTS

Jane Hoskyn answers all your consumer questions

Don't get ripped off by refunds

If a camera costs £50 plus £5 delivery, but your refund is only £50 – you've been conned.

The law on refunds for online shopping is clear: refunds are also supposed to include the original postage charge. But according to a new UK-wide survey by the Society of Chief Officers of Trading Standards in Scotland (SCOTSS), most of us get short-changed when we send back faulty items.

The survey found a "worryingly high" level of refund rule-breaking. More than a quarter of websites illegally deducted original delivery charges from refunds; more than half failed to provide a full refund when required; and 43 per cent didn't tell customers that they could cancel their purchase within seven days.

SCOTSS chairman Colin Baxter conceded that many online businesses lack experience. "New entrants are joining the market every day, many of them micro-businesses with little experience of consumer law," he said. But if someone is bright enough to run a web business, you'd think they'd know the basics on refunds. There's plenty of up-to-date info from GOV.UK (bit.ly/refund327) and Which (bit.ly/whichrefund327). MoneySavingExpert.com even has a mnemonic for sellers to understand the rules: SAD FART. (That's S for 'satisfactory quality', A and D for 'as described'. You can find the rest at bit.ly/moneyback327.)

Our guess is that retailers know the law, but are happy to take advantage of the public's ignorance. Arm yourself with the facts so you can't be fobbed off. For example, if an item is faulty, the retailer must refund, replace or repair it, along with your original delivery charge. If they still refuse, use this template from Which: bit.ly/letter327. For further action, contact your local Trading Standards office (bit.ly/trading327).

SEND YOUR EMAILS TO WEBUSER@DENNIS.CO.UK

Air your views, write to us at webuser@dennis.co.uk

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AN INSTANT EXPERT GUIDE TO

4G

High-speed mobile internet is gradually becoming available across the UK. **David Crookes** cuts through the confusion regarding the 4G rollout

Q WHAT IS IT?

A It's a high-speed data network for mobile phones. Currently, most smartphones use 3G networks, but 4G – which stands for Fourth Generation of Cellular Communications – is the latest technology and the one that mobile service providers are hoping to switch us to in the long run.

Q WHY SHOULD I WANT IT?

A Simply because it's considerably faster than existing mobile networks. To use an example, 1G only allowed for voice calls but the 2G network was fast enough for both calls and text messages. 3G is much better equipped to run the internet o smartphones, because it has the extra speed to cope with the strain of performing this task. But although 3G works perfectly well, our mobile demands are rising all the time. People who stream video and audio to their phones, and use maps and other data-hungry apps, find that 3G is not always fast enough, which is where 4G comes in.

Q HOW MUCH FASTER IS IT?

A Speeds are close to what you would experience with home broadband. Download speeds for 4G should be between five and seven times those for 3G networks. Ofcom (www.ofcom.org.uk) provides the example that a music album takes around 20 minutes to download on 3G, but only around three minutes on 4G, assuming that you are getting 1Mbps on 3G and 6Mbps on 4G.

Q DO WE REALLY NEED IT?

A That depends. In recent years, network traffic for mobile broadband has been higher than the demand for voice calls, which proved that more and more of us are accessing the internet on the move. Mobile operators believe that the reason we tend to rely on Wi-Fi is because it is quicker than 3G, not because it's cheaper. Therefore, people will use 4G because it will give them the speeds they want, despite the higher cost.

Q HOW DOES 4G WORK, THEN?

A The connection to and from your smartphone or tablet is a radio signal. Both 3G and 4G send data via this signal in packets – small units of binary data that contain information about where it is being sent from and to, and whether there are more packets preceding or following it. One difference between 3G and 4G is that more data is stuffed into these packets when using 4G, and this increases their speed and efficiency as they race through the radio system. But 4G is also faster because it uses something called Orthogonal Frequency Division Multiplexing, which reduces the time it takes to buffer and connect to websites. With 4G being more a data network than a voice one, everything is geared towards getting these packets to you in the optimum way. Even voice calls are sent via internet data.

Q WHO IS OFFERING IT?

A The first company to allow consumers access to a 4G network in the UK was EE (ee.co.uk), which unveiled its tariffs and service last October. This was possible because it could use spare capacity in its broadband spectrum. Ofcom (consumers.ofcom.org.uk/4g) allowed EE to relicense some of its existing bandwidth, so it could provide 4G on the 1.8GHz spectrum that EE previously used for 2G and 3G services. Since then, it has also bought space on the other two 4G bands – 800Mhz and 2.6Ghz. O2 (o2.co.uk), Vodafone (vodafone.co.uk) and Three (three.co.uk) are now rolling out their own services, too.

EE was the first company to launch a 4G service in the UK

Discuss 4G services at forum.webuser.co.uk

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Q HANG ON, SLOW DOWN: Mhz AND Ghz?

A Okay, apologies. There are three spectrum bandwidths for any networks that want to allow customers to use 4G: 800Mhz, 1.8GHz and 2.6Ghz. EE petitioned Ofcom to convert some of its existing 1.8GHz network capacity to 4G, which gave it a head start on its rivals, who didn't have this option. Those companies were only able to jump on the 4G bandwagon once the two other spectrum bandwidths – 800MHz and 2.6GHz – had been freed up and put up for sale in a lucrative auction.

Q SO WHAT HAVE THEY ALL BOUGHT?

A EE, as we said, has pieces of all three spectrums; Vodafone has part of the 800MHz and 2.6GHz bands; while O2 and Three have part of the 800MHz spectrum.

Vodafone's 4G service includes Sky Sports and Spotify Premium

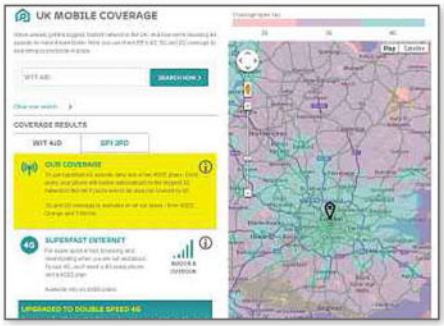
Q DOES IT MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

A Yes: 800MHz was once a spectrum band for TV signals and is great for use in the countryside and outdoors because of its low-frequency spectrum. Meanwhile, 2.66GHz was used by operators of cordless video cameras and is brilliant for cities due to its high frequency, which lets it send data at speed over shorter distances. 1.8GHz is kind of in the middle. This means that if you live in a city, you may be better off with Vodafone rather than O2 or Three.

O2 4G will be available in 13 UK cities by the end of the year

Q CAN I GET IT NOW?

A You have been able to get EE 4G since October 2012 and its coverage now extends to 105 towns and cities. Vodafone has so far switched on its 4G coverage in parts of London and O2 is available in London, Leeds and Bradford. Three's 4G is not yet available. Use the coverage map on a mobile network's website to find out if 4G is available in your area.



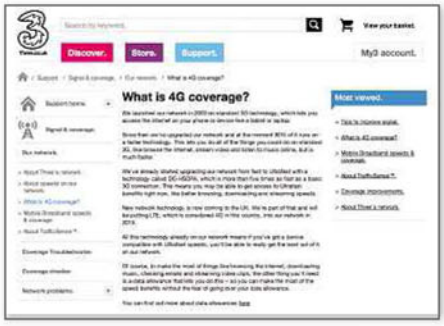
Use a network coverage map to see if 4G has reached your area

Q SO WHEN CAN I GET IT?

A With Three, you'lll have to wait until December when the service rolls out in London, Birmingham and Manchester. Both O2 and Vodafone promise to have 4G coverage in many more cities before the end of the year, with Birmingham, Coventry, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Leicester, Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle, Nottingham and Sheffield expected to come online.

Q HOW MUCH DOES IT COST?

A Prices for O2 and Vodafone will be from £26-per-month on a contract, for 1GB and 2GB of data, respectively. Three has said that unlimited data



Three is set to launch its 4G service in December, at no extra cost to customers

packages will be offered to its customers at no extra cost although, again, this is limited to three cities and there is no mention of when others will be added. EE responded to rival 4G services entering the fray by lowering the cost on its cheapest contract by £5 to £26-per-month. It also has a £21-per-month, SIM-only that gives you a measly 500MB of data. You get more data allowance as you go higher up the tariff bands.

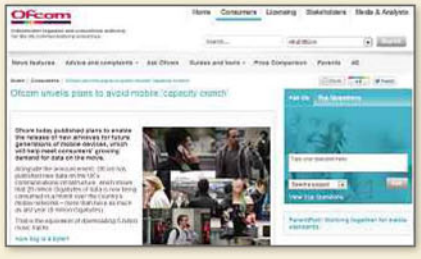
Q WILL IT WORK ON MY CURRENT PHONE OR TABLET?

A You will need a newer handset, such as a Samsung Galaxy S4 or an HTC One. If you have an iPhone 5, you can only use 4G on EE because Apple designed it to work with the only available network at the time. That will inevitably change when the new iPhone is released, but the current top-spec model won't work on the 800Mhz or 2.6Ghz spectrums.

WHAT ABOUT 5G?

Even as 4G is being slowly rolled out, there is already talk of 5G. The plans for this are due to be unveiled later this autumn and Ofcom believes it to be so important that we may even need it in place by the end of the decade. It hopes to be auctioning 5G licences by 2018, using the 2.3GHz, 3.5GHz and the 700Mhz frequency currently being used by Freeview – which is bound to annoy broadcasters, especially after the 800Mhz frequency used by TV was snatched away for 4G.

Samsung believes that 5G could end up downloading data at a whopping



1GB per second, and be used for all sorts of clever purposes including smart traffic services that spot jams and ease congestions more quickly, and online dustbins that let councils empty waste over the internet.

Get more tips in our newsletter at www.webuser.co.uk/newsletter

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COVER FEATURE

40 MOST AMAZING things you'll ever do ON THE WEB

Want to try something different and exciting next time you go online? **Wayne Williams** reveals 40 of the most mind-blowing things you can now do using your PC, tablet or phone

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Technology moves so quickly that you can now do things online that would have been unthinkable even a couple of years ago. Tomorrow's world is rapidly becoming today's, as the web turns science fiction into science fact, putting all manner of useful and innovative tools at our fingertips.

The speed of these developments makes it easy to take for granted many of the services and devices we use every day, and to forget how genuinely groundbreaking the likes of Street View, the iPhone and BBC iPlayer were when they launched. In this feature, we take a look some of the most eye-opening new things you can do on the web right now, which you may not have realised were possible. We also explore some of the amazing online technology that's about to hit us.

You'll discover, for example, how to create artwork from your DNA, send messages from beyond the grave, turn yourself into LEGO and much, much more.

CREATE AND BUY AMAZING THINGS

Turn your photos into 3D sculptures

You can add an extra dimension to your photos by making the subjects literally stand out from the frame. BumpyPhoto (www.bumpyphoto.com) converts your 2D images into 3D sculptures, letting you choose from 'standard relief' designs that give depth to a person or animal's head and body, or a custom made cut-out that removes the background to produce a standalone

sculpture. The former costs from £82.82, and the latter from £89.24. You can specify which part of the photo has 3D, the size and depth, and the production speed.

Convert your ideas into 3D models

3D printing is the next big thing, but while the cost of 3D printers is slowly coming down, they are still out of most people's price range. Fortunately, there are several web services that perform the task for you, turning your 3D ideas into reality. Sculpteo (www.sculpteo.com/en) and Shapeways (www.shapeways.com) are two of the best.

Just upload your 3D design, or use the online tools to create an object, and the site will print it for you. Both services provide 3D-modelling tutorials, with the cost of the finished product depending on its size and complexity, and the colours used.

Create genetic artwork from your DNA

If you're after some unusual art to brighten up your home, try DNA11 (www.dna11.com). This UK company makes colourful pictures from a sample of your DNA, which you provide using their supplied collecting kit. Prices start from £144.

DNA11 also makes DNA Ancestry portraits, which are actually large QR codes. When scanned using a smartphone app, they reveal your genetic lineage. They're expensive, though, with prices starting at £282.

Turn your photos into wooden artworks

For a unique gift idea, check out Photocarver (store.photocarver.com/en). Upload an image to the site and this

ingenious service will carve it into a wooden surface, producing a 3D result or, as the website puts it, "photos to touch". Prices start from €89 (about £75) for an A3 picture, plus €29.90 (about £25) for carbon-neutral delivery. Once you've uploaded your picture, you can adjust the contrast and choose between line- and dot-relief, and MDF (medium-density fireboard) natural or black dyed.

Create photos from text

Textographer (www.textographer.com) creates text-o-graphs, which are images made entirely of text. From a distance, you see the photo, but as you get closer, you can read the text. Because Textographer doesn't deliver to the UK, you buy the text-o-graphs in digital format and can then get them printed out to a size and medium of your choice using a service such as PhotoBox (www.photobox.co.uk). The digital files cost $50 (about £32).

Create a time-lapse video of a journey

You don't need a camera to create a time-lapse movie. Hyperlapse (hyperlapse.tllabs.io) lets you compile

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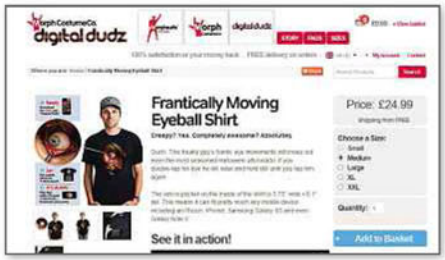
an impressive (and interactive) time-lapse video using Google Street View images. Just set the start and end points (long, straight roads with the occasional bridge or tunnel work best). You can change the point of view by dragging the green target around the map area, and pause the animation at any point. Sadly, you can't export the time-lapse movie to watch elsewhere.

Buy a digital fancy-dress outfit

Morphsuits sells fancy-dress costumes that you can bring to life using your smartphone or iPad (bit.ly/morphsuit327). Dress as a Facebook page, for example (yes, really) and the Like counter automatically changes. Choose the zombie suit and you can add a beating heart to the hole in your chest. It works using a free animation app you download to your device, with each costume featuring a display pocket in which to place your phone or tablet for maximum effect. Our favourite is the frantically moving eyeball shirt, which is sure to prove terrifying on Hallowe'en. Prices start at £24.99



Use your phone to furnish your home

When shopping for furniture, it can be difficult to know exactly how well an item will fit when it's placed in your home. IKEA has solved the problem by using the power of augmented reality. Just install the 2014 IKEA Catalogue app for iOS (bit.ly/ikea327) and you can try out 90 products for size (and shape, colour and positioning). You place the IKEA catalogue (which you can pick up in-store) on the spot where you want the item of furniture to go, and the app then substitutes it for an augmented-reality image of the chosen product. You can watch a video explaining how the app works at bit.ly/ikeavideo327.

Create a LEGO figure of a friend

Turn somebody you know into a tiny yellow character at Minifigs.me (minifigs.me). This fun site lets you design LEGO figures using different heads, hairstyles, legs and accessories. Yoiu can customise their body with a message, or upload a photo of the person and let Minifigs LEGO-ise them for you. Alternatively, you can buy figures of famous people, including Wills and Kate (pictured), Boris Johnson and Mo Farah. Prices vary according to the parts you choose, but a basic figure sporting the image or message of your choice costs £7.99.

Convert images into editable text online

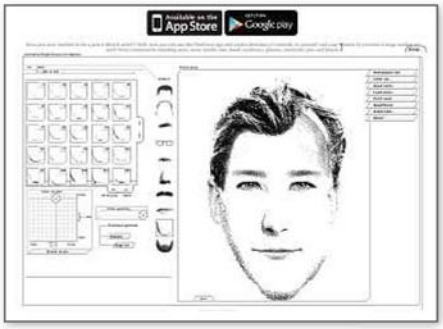
If you have an image or a scan containing text, OCR (optical character recognition) digitises the words, making it possible to edit them. If you don't have an OCR program, you can use the free online tool Online OCR (www.onlineocr.net). Just click Browse and upload the image you want to grab the text from. It can recognise most common languages and output the file in a choice of formats.

Create a book from Wikipedia articles

Wikipedia sometimes gets criticised for inaccuracies and overzealous moderators, but it's packed with detailed (and mostly reliable) entries, covering everything you could possibly want to know. If you're interested in a particular topic, you can select multiple entries from the site and turn them into a printed book. Go to an entry, then click 'Print/export' on the left and select 'Create a book'. Start the book creator and manage the contents. Books are printed by Pedia Press (pediapress.com) and you can design the cover yourself. It's a great idea for a gift.

Create a police sketch of someone's face

Ever wondered how easy it is to build a photofit of someone, as police artists do from witness descriptions? You can find out by using the brilliant Flashface app (flashface.ctapt.de), which lets you create sketches of anyone – friends, family and suspected criminals – by dragging facial components to the board and scaling them as required. Elements include eyes, nose, mouth, hair, head, eyebrows, glasses, moustache, jaw and beard, with lots of variations on offer to help you nail the person's likeness. There are also free apps available for iOS and Android.



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DISCOVER FASCINATING FACTS

View the first ever web page

Sir Tim Berners-Lee developed the web more than two decades ago at the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN). Earlier this year, to celebrate the milestone, CERN recreated the first ever web page from August 1991, which you can view at the original URL: http://info.cern.ch/hypertext/WWW/TheProject.html. As you might expect, the page consists solely of text and doesn't make particularly interesting viewing, but it is worth a look just to see how far we've come since those early days.

See how the Government spends our money

Launched by Cabinet Office Minister Chloë Smith, GIST (Government Interrogating Spending Tool) lets you see how taxpayers' money was spent in the last year. Go to www.gist.cabinetoffice.gov.uk to view easy-to-understand data visualisations through OSCAR (Online System for Central Accounting and Reporting) or QDS (Quarterly Data Summary). You can explore the data online or download it in CSV format.

Analyse your Facebook activity

Connect Wolfram Alpha to your Facebook account (www.wolframalpha.com/facebook) and the site will generate an in-depth report on your social activity. It will show your most liked and most commented-on posts, the number of photos you've shared and even your most commonly used words (in the form of a tag cloud).

Wolfram Alpha also displays charts of your friends' gender, age and relationship status; plots all the places you've checked into on a map, and

YEARS ZOMBIES ABDUCTING ABSOLUTELY ABUNDANTLY
THINK THROUGH TOUGH TRICK UNTIL
PUBLISHER REASONABLE SNOWMAN
HOT HOURS HOUSE LOOKS LOVED
FISHING FOOTER FREE FRENCH FULL
AVAILABLE CHUFFED DARREN DOOR
PANIC PEOPLE REALLY WELL
GOING HAPPY HARD HAVING

more. It's a great way to see whether you're sharing too much information and lets you compare your activity to that of your Facebook pals.

Find out which breed of bird you've spotted

If you've seen an unfamiliar bird while out and about, you can use the RSPB's Bird Identifier tool (bit.ly/birds327) to find out what it is. Answer some questions regarding the bird's size, place where spotted, feathers, beak, behaviour and leg colour, and the site will present possible matches, which narrow down as you provide more details.

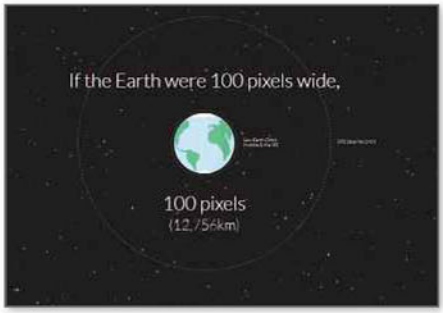
Identify objects in the night sky

When you look up at pin-point lights in the night sky, it's hard to tell whether you're looking at stars, planets, satellites or other celestial objects. Night Sky 2 for the iPad (99p from bit.ly/nightsky327) tells you instantly what something is. Just point the app at the heavens and it will identify it for you. There's also an augmented reality mode that overlays labels on top of the view through the iPad's rear camera.

For Android, try the amazing free astronomy app SkEye (bit.ly/skyeye327), which you can use with or without a telescope.

Take a trip to Mars

If you dream that Earthlings will one day colonise Mars, Distance to Mars (distancetomars.com) will give you a sense of the scale of the journey. The simulation shows how long the trip would take if you were to travel at three times the speed of light. You can use Google Mars (www.google.co.uk/mars) to have a look around the Red Planet from above, or explore from ground level using NASA's 1.3-gigapixel Mars panorama (bit.ly/mars327), which was captured by the Curiosity Mars Rover.



Track the International Space Station in real time

The International Space Station (ISS) measures 110 x 100 x 30m and reflects a lot of sunlight. This makes it visible from the Earth with the naked eye, provided you have decent eyesight and are looking up on a clear night and at the right time. To find out when the ISS will pass over your location, go to the ISS Tracker website (www.isstracker.com). If you think you saw it previously, you can confirm your sighting using the 'Was that the ISS?' historical view (www.isstracker.com/historical).

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PERFORM INCREDIBLE FEATS

Climb Mount Everest from your phone or tablet

Some 547 people attempted to climb the world's highest mountain last year, with 56 per cent successfully reaching the summit, and 10 unlucky souls meeting their deaths. If you want to see what it's like to scale Everest, but would rather not risk life and limb, you can view the mighty mountain as a high-resolution 3D map, by downloading the free app for Android and iOS devices (www.everest3d.de/en). This recreates Everest using satellite images taken from different angles, with each step accompanied by historical and geographical information, weather statistics, webcam shots and photos.

If you want more features, there's a Pro version on offer, and a Mount Everest 3D program you can download to your PC.

Use a ring to unlock physical objects

Wouldn't it be great if your phone unlocked automatically the second you took it out of your pocket? Or if your front door opened as soon as you reached it, without you needing to insert a key? It might sound like you've been granted telekinetic powers but these are actually some of the feats made possible by the Kickstarter-funded NFC Ring (nfcring.com), which uses Near Field Communication (NFC) to connect to other devices. Most people know that NFC lets you tap someone's phone to send your contact information to it, but the ring takes the technology further.

It's being funded and sold through Kickstarter (bit.ly/nfcring327), priced at £22, but high demand for the device means it's currently sold out. Expect more stock soon.

See who's at your front door, wherever you are

Instead of going to the front door every time the doorbell rings, you can use the Wi-Fi enabled iDoorCam (www.idoorcam.com) to find out who's there. This saves you having to get up, and means you can choose to ignore unwanted callers. All you need is the device itself and the free iOS or Android app, and you can see, hear and talk to visitors, from wherever you are. The iDoorCam was crowd-funded through IndieGoGo (bit.ly/indie327), raising more than treble the original target of $100,000. It's due to go on sale in October for $149.95 (about £106) and you can pre-order one now through the website.

Print your tweets as ticker tape

If you love all things Steampunk (a science-fiction genre that combines 19th-century Victorian technology with futuristic ideas), then the Twittertape Machine (www.twittertape.co.uk) inspired by old tickertape devices will definitely appeal to you. According to the website: "This astounding device will print a permanent copy of all tweets yet requires no ink or computer". So not only will it appeal to your aesthetic tastes, but it's also handy for creating a back-up of your social blatherings.

The Twittertape is just a prototype at the moment, so you can't actually buy it, but hopefully it will soon appear on a crowd-funding site such as Kickstarter.

Send messages to loved ones after you die

Few of us want to think about dying, but DeadSocial (www.deadsoci.al) provides a way to live on digitally for a short while after you've gone. You can create a series of messages that will be published to your social accounts after your death. This gives you the chance to say goodbye, crack a final joke, tell friends and family something you could never bear to say to them or get revenge on a sworn enemy from beyond the grave. The scheduled messages can be posted to Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn, and include videos, images and text.

You can also use Google's Inactive Account Manager (bit.ly/inactive327) to control what happens to your Google accounts after you die, such as deleting persona data or passing it in on to trusted contacts.

Send a message to your future self

Wouldn't it be great if you could send a message to your younger self, so you could be warned of impending pitfalls and buy shares in Apple and Google before they make it big. Well, you can't, but you can send messages into the future with FutureMe (www.futureme.org). The service lets you write a letter to yourself and schedule it for a future date – anytime from now until 2063. You can even attach a photo. When that date arrives, the service will email you your message – provided you're still using the same address.

You can also read some of the (anonymous) public messages sent by other users to their future selves, some of which are rather sweet: "Dear FutureMe, I hope you're a teacher. I hope

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you love your job. I hope you're married to Dexter. I hope you are happy".

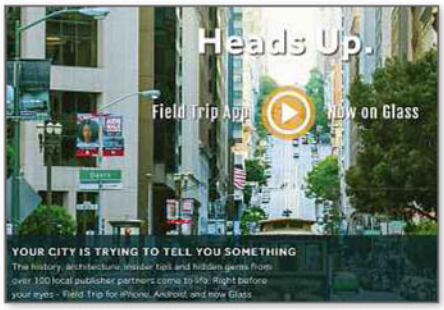
Use your phone to control web games

Back in February, Google launched Chrome Super Sync Sports (chrome.com/supersyncsports), a sports game that you play in your browser but connect to and control using your smartphone or tablet. Just move your fingers over your touchscreen to perform the challenges, which include running, cycling and swimming.

There are lots of other apps available that let you use your Android device as a game controller. Our favourite free options are iplay Remote Pad (bit.ly/iplay327), nJoy Lite (bit.ly/njoy327) and Monect Portable (bit.ly/monect327).

Do everything using your glasses

Although Google Glass (www.google.com/glass) isn't on sale yet, it already has lots of innovative apps that do things previously only dreamt of by science fiction writers. For example, the Field Trip (www.fieldtripper.com) uses GPS to provide information about your location, including historical facts and the best places to eat, right in front of your eyes. You can try it now on Android and iOS. Other apps include the Viddy Eye app for capturing and sharing short videos; NavCook, which provides step-by-step cooking instructions; and Glass Feeds, which displays the latest news headlines. But our favourite is Glass Praiser (glassappz.com/apps/glass-praiser), which sends you a motivational messages every morning "to boost your ego".



5 AMAZING NEW THINGS YOU'LL FIND ONLINE

Step inside Doctor Who's TARDIS

A battered but familiar-looking blue police box can be seen outside London's Earls Court Tube station on Street View (bit.ly/tardis327). Visit this link in Google Maps and you should see a double arrow pointing towards the box (if not, try a different browser). Click this and you'll find yourself inside the TARDIS, where you can have a thorough nose around.

Use Jedi powers on YouTube

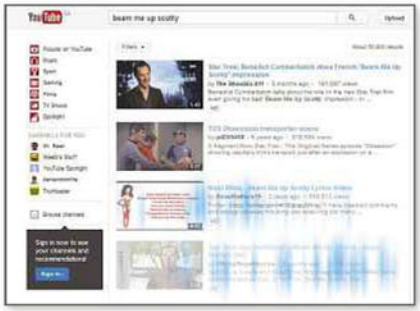
Go to YouTube and type 'Use the Force Luke' into the search box. A selection of Star Wars videos will appear and start wobbling about, following the pull of your cursor as if they are being controlled by a mysterious force.

Let ponies loose on YouTube

Search for 'Ponies' on YouTube and, after a few seconds, the colourful creatures from My Little Ponies will begin galloping across the screen. Typing 'Bronies' (the name of male My Little Ponies fans) will do the same. If you happen to know the name of any of the ponies (such as Rainbow Dash), searching for them will change the colour of the top bar.

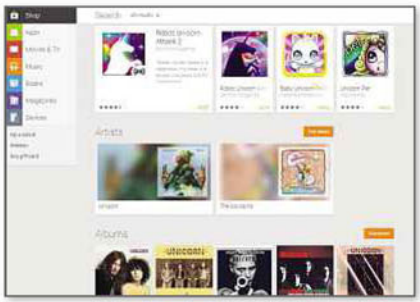
Beam up Star Trek video results

Type 'Beam Me up Scotty' into YouTube and a selection of Star Trek related video results will materialise as if they've just been beamed aboard the USS Enterprise.



Unlock unicorn content on Google Play

Go to Google Play and perform a search without typing anything into the box. For some unexplained reason, Google will decide you meant to search for unicorns and will present you with movies, TV episodes, apps and more related to the mythical horned creatures.



WorldMags.net

5 AMAZING THINGS WE'D LIKE TO DO ON THE WEB

View real-time Google Maps

Imagine if Google could update its satellite imagery in real-time so you could see yourself and track your friends. Granted, this would be a privacy nightmare, but it would be great for shooting down flimsy excuses from friends who are always late!

Travel in a Street View time machine

The Street View TARDIS on page 47 had us thinking about time travel and how amazing it would be to explore streets as they once were. Historypin (www.historypin.com) already superimposes old photos and videos on modern maps and Street View imagery, but we reckon Google could use images, videos and computer graphics to create something even more immersive.

Have private chats with famous people

Like a cross between speed dating and Chatroulette (chatroulette.com), you'd get to converse with celebrities who signed up. Chinwagging with the stars could be so much more personal than on Twitter, although celebrities would risk being on the receiving end of abuse and you might get stuck talking to someone from *The Only Way is Essex*.

Try on clothes before buying online

Some retailers already offer a virtual dressing room feature, such as Webcam Social Shopper (webcamsocialshopper.com), which super-imposes outfits over a photo or webcam video of you. But it would be great to use 3D modelling to see how the clothes fit as you move around, too.

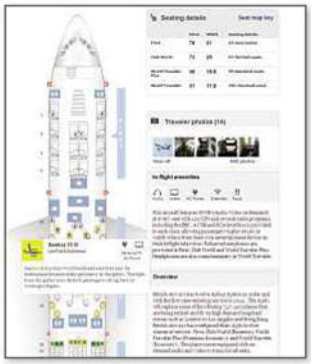
Cook your own dinner online

Rather than order a takeaway, you could make your own meal by choosing ingredients, virtually preparing and cooking them, and then have the finished food delivered hot to your door. Perfect for adventurous gastronomes who hate washing up!

MAKE PRACTICAL TASKS EASY AND FUN

Get the most comfortable seat on any flight

Don't get stuck on a long flight in a cramped seat next to a noisy toilet. SeatGuru (www.seatguru.com) lets you look at airline seat maps so you can choose the most comfortable and convenient place to sit before you book.



Browse the site by airline, or search for a specific flight, to view summaries of seats, including details such as legroom, noise, comfort and view. SeatGuru, which is owned by TripAdvisor, also provides useful information about check-in procedures and baggage allowances. To get a second opinion about a seat, try the similar SeatExpert (seatexpert.com).

Measure your ring size online

The standard way to measure your fingers is to use a ring-size chart, but there is a quicker web-based option. Find My Ring Size (findmyringsize.com) gets you to place a card with a magnetic strip (such as a credit card) against your monitor for calibration purposes. You then take an existing ring and compare it with the circles on the screen to find out your size. Make sure you switch to UK sizes because by default, the site uses US measurements, which involves a completely different scale.

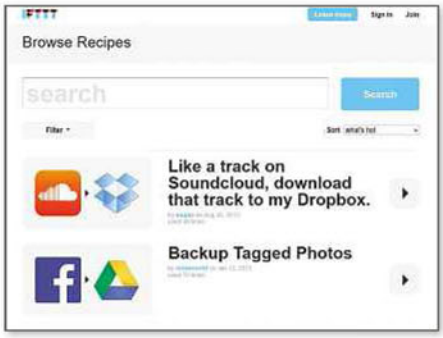
Share your belongings with friends

Google is said to be working on a service that lets you share your gadgets, CDs, clothes, cars, bikes and other items with friends. Called Google Mine, it not only lets people borrow your belongings over the web, but also provides tools to keep track of what your friends are sharing, post photos and rate shared objects. When (or rather if) the service sees the light of day, it will integrate with Google+ and an Android app. Find out more at bit.ly/googlemine327.

Make different sites work in unison

As we explained in our IFTTT (If This Then That, ifttt.com) feature last issue (bit.ly/webuser326), it's now possible to automate all kinds of online tasks to save you time and effort. For example, you could 'like' a track on SoundCloud and have it automatically saved to your Dropbox folder, have photos you upload to Facebook also sent to Picasa, or shrink any web links you send via Gmail.

The apparently limitless scope of IFTTT makes it one of the most useful new services to emerge in the last couple of years. It's easy to create your own connections based on triggers and actions, or you can just browse the hundreds of ready-made selections (called recipes) at ifttt.com/recipes.



Sell your own music through digital stores

If you enjoy making music, you can sell your recordings via TuneCore (www.tunecore.com). The site gets you into over 74 popular digital stores including iTunes, Amazon MP3, Google Play and Spotify. You pay a set fee ($29.99 per album, which is about £19.25) but you get to keep all the money from any sales you make. Alternatively, you can try CD Baby (members.cdbaby.com), which lets you sell physical and digital copies of your music.

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Like on Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/pages/Download-from-harks/124201754417002

GET FITTER AND HEALTHIER

Discover how alcohol is affecting your looks

The Drinking Mirror (bit.ly/drinkmirror327) shows how your looks can be improved by reducing the amount of alcohol you consume in a week. Upload a photo and position it in the correct place in the mirror. Choose how many glasses of your chosen tipple you drink weekly (none, 1-5, 6-10 or 10+) and it will distort the image accordingly. Use the slider to "drop a glass size" and see the improvement.

Get fit in just seven minutes a day

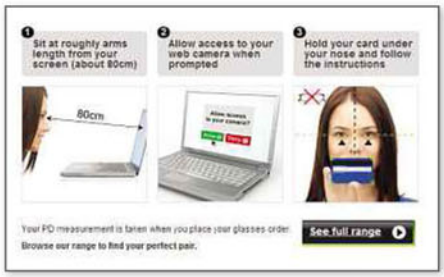
Not everyone has the time or inclination to spend hours a week at the gym, but most of us have seven minutes to spare. The 7-Min Workout comprises of jumping jacks, wall sits, push-ups (with and without rotation), abdominal crunches, chair step-ups, squats, triceps dips, plank (regular and side), high-knees running and lunge. The 7Min Scientific Workout Timer (www.7-min.com) guides you though the process and counts down each stage.

Turn your bed into a sleep tracker

The crowdfunded project Beddit (bit.ly/beddit327) is described as an "automatic sleep and wellness tracker". The ultra-thin sensor goes under your bedsheet to monitor your sleep quality, heart rate, snoring, breathing and other details. It then transmits the information to an app that provides a full report when you wake up to help you manage and improve your sleep quality. It costs $99 (about £64), plus international delivery costs.

Measure your pupillary distance

The Tesco Opticians website (bit.ly/tescopd327) lets you measure your pupillary distance (PD) to ensure that glasses you buy on the web fit properly. To use this online tool, you'll need a webcam, decent lighting and a card with a magnetic strip on the back, such as a Tesco Clubcard. Just follow the instructions on the site, then use the info to purchase your specs from Tesco or another online optician.


1 Sit at roughly arms length from your screen (about 80cm)
2 Allow access to your web camera when prompted
3 Hold your card under your nose and follow the instructions
80cm
Your PD measurement is taken when you place your glasses order
Browse our range to find your perfect pair.
See full range

What you say...

We asked *Web User* readers about the most amazing things they've seen or done online. Here's what you told us...

Met my current partner. We've been together nearly eight years!
Phil Graham

Met loads of new friends with shared interests, hobbies and ideas. I've learned so much.
Jenny Francis

I got back in contact with my twin daughters after 27 years apart.
David R Bellairs

I met the love of my life and two of my best friends online. Nothing is more amazing than discovering people that change your life.
Emmy UpTo-NoGood

I speak to my kids via Gmail - one lives in the US and the other in Oz.
Louise Lucas-Sanders

Cats with Hitler moustaches.
Billy Green

Felix Baumgartner's Red Bull Stratos stunt has got to be up there.
Bruce Lauderdale

Getting into conversations with top astronomers on Twitter.
Chris Cole

Just Eat (www.just-eat.co.uk): meat feast pizza with added doner meat.
Sim Mellor

NEXT ISSUE ON SALE THURSDAY 3 OCTOBER 2013

DOWNLOAD ANYTHING!

We reveal how to get everything you want from the web, even stuff you thought you couldn't

PLUS...

COVER YOUR TRACKS
Delete all traces of your PC activities using Privazer 2

BLOCK NUISANCE CALLS
How the web can help you beat annoying phone pests

KILL YOUR PROGRAMS
Shut down problematic software that refuses to close

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Secret Windows tools *that improve your PC*

Several of the best programs built into Windows are easy to miss, unless you know where they are. **Robert Irvine** rounds up 10 of the most useful hidden tools

Resource Monitor

What does it do?

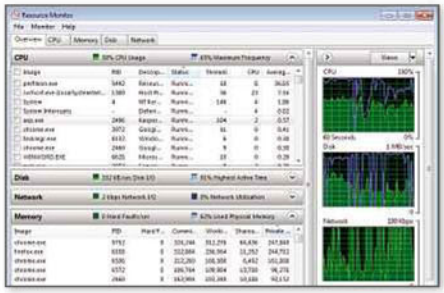
Resource Monitor provides an in-depth overview of your system's performance, along with detailed information about your processor, memory and hard drive. It's a useful way to identify and stop programs that are slowing down your PC by hogging system resources.

How do I launch it?

In Windows 8, 7 and Vista, press the Windows key+R, type `resmon` and press Enter. Alternatively, press Ctrl+Alt+Del, choose Start Task Manager, click the Performance tab and click Resource Monitor.

ADVANCED TIP:

Once you've identified a resource hog, right-click its entry in the Processes list and select End Process.

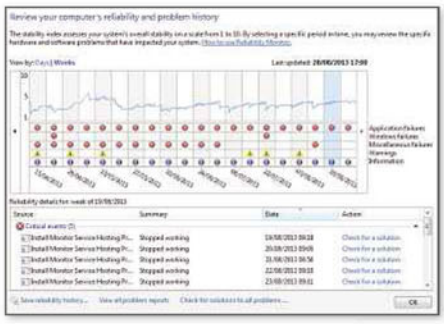


Reliability Monitor

What does it do?

This tool measures hardware and software problems, and other changes to your computer.

If a particular program or device is causing a lot of errors, you can try to fix it or find an alternative option.



How do I launch it?

In Windows 8, 7 and Vista, press Windows+R, type `perfmon /rel` and press Enter. In Windows 8, you can also type `reliability` into the Settings search box.

ADVANCED TIP:

Click a red cross to view information about an error, then choose 'Check for a solution'.

Windows Memory Diagnostic

What does it do?

This tool detects possible problems with your computer's memory that may cause it to freeze and crash. It usually appears automatically and gives you the options of restarting your PC immediately to check for memory problems or waiting until you next turn it on.

How do I launch it?

To launch Windows Memory Diagnostic in Windows 7 and Vista, go to Start, type `memory` and click 'Diagnose your computer's memory problems'. In Windows 8, you can find this option by searching for `memory` and clicking Settings.

Advanced tip:

When the tool starts, press F1 to choose the type of test to run: Basic, Standard or Extended.

Windows Memory Diagnostic
Check your computer for memory problems
Memory problems can cause your computer to lose information or stop working. How does Windows diagnose memory problems?
Restart now and check for problems (recommended)
Save your work and close any open programs before restarting.
Check for problems the next time I start my computer
Cancel

Problem Steps Recorder

What does it do?

This useful tool (called Steps Recorder in Windows 8) records everything you do onscreen, capturing a picture and producing a text description of each action. The steps are saved to a file that you can view in your browser and email to other people. It's a great tool for showing a problem you're experiencing to someone else, and for demonstrating how to solve a problem.

How do I launch it?

In Windows 7 and 8, press Windows+R, type `psr` and press Enter. Click Start Record, perform your actions, then click Stop Record. The Save box will open automatically.

ADVANCED TIP:

To draw attention to a particular section of your screen, click Add Comment. Highlight the problem area and type your note.

Snipping Tool

What does it do?

The Snipping Tool lets you capture a snapshot of your whole screen, or just a selected area or window. It's much more sophisticated than simply pressing the Print Screen button, because you don't need to paste the screen grab into another program, and you can write and draw on what you snip using pen and highlighter tools. There's even a Free-form Snip option, which lets you

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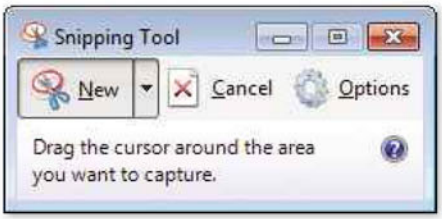


draw a shape around an object using your mouse.

How do I launch it?

In Windows 7 (Home Premium, Professional, Ultimate and Enterprise editions), click Start, type `snipping` and press Enter. In Windows 8, type `Snipping Tool` into the Search box, then click or tap Apps.

ADVANCED TIP:

You can share what you snip with other people by clicking the File menu and choosing Send To, Email Recipient or Email Recipient (as attachment).

Display Color Calibration Wizard

What does it do?

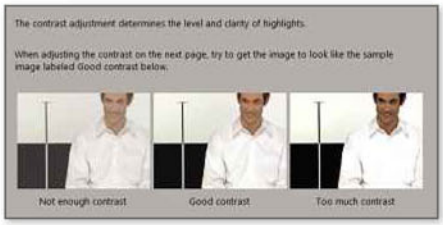
If your monitor isn't displaying colours correctly, this tool helps you adjust the settings to fix the problem. The calibration process asks you to perform a series of tasks, such as using your monitor's controls to increase a picture's contrast without losing detail. The wizard covers gamma (the relationship between red, blue and green), brightness, contrast and colour balance.

How do I launch it?

In Windows 7, press Start, type `dccw` and press Enter. In Windows 8, search for `calibrate`, then click 'Calibrate display color'.

ADVANCED TIP:

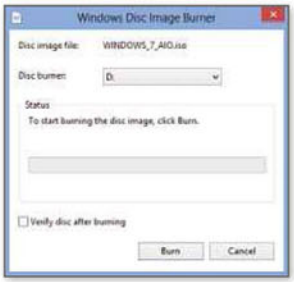
You can compare the adjustments you've made to your display by clicking the 'Previous calibration' and 'Current calibration' buttons.


The contrast adjustment determines the level and clarity of highlights.
When adjusting the contrast on the next page, try to get the image to look like the sample image labeled Good contrast below.
Not enough contrast
Good contrast
Too much contrast

Windows Disc Image Burner

What does it do?

This tool lets you burn ISO image files to disc. These are copies of entire CDs, DVDs and Blu-rays, containing all the files and folders stored on them in a single file. ISO files are good for creating quick back-ups, and many PC-rescue kits are in this format. The Windows Disc Image Burner saves you having to download software such as ImgBurn (www.imgburn.com) to write your ISO file to disc.



How do I launch it?

If you don't have any other burning software installed, just double-click the ISO file to launch the burner. If you do, right-click the file and choose 'Burn disc image' (Windows 7 and 8 only).

ADVANCED TIP:

To make sure the ISO file burns to disc correctly, select the 'Verify disc after burning' option.

Sticky Notes

What does it do?

Sticky Notes are like Desktop versions of Post-It notes, which allow you to jot down the things you need to do. You can create as many as you want, in different colours, and place them anywhere you want on your screen.

How do I launch it?

In Windows 7 (except Starter and Home Basic editions), go to Start, type `sticky` and press Enter. In Windows 8, search for `sticky`.

ADVANCED TIP:

To add bullet points to your Sticky Notes to-do list, press Ctrl+Shift+L. Press the shortcut again to switch to a numbered list.

Malicious Software Removal Tool

What does it do?

Unsurprisingly, it removes malicious software! However, although it's downloaded and updated through Windows Update, you'd be forgiven for not realising it was there. The tool runs automatically, but remember that it's designed to work alongside your existing anti-virus software, not to replace it.

How do I launch it?

To run the tool manually, press the Windows key+R, type `mrt` and press Enter. Click Next and select which scan to run: Quick, Full or Customised.

ADVANCED TIP:

If, for some reason, you don't have the tool installed, you can download it from bit.ly/mrt327.

Microsoft Windows Malicious Software Removal Tool - Aug. 2013
Scan type
Please choose a type of scan:
Quick scan. Scans areas of the system most likely to contain malicious software. If malicious software is found, you may be prompted to run a full scan.
Full scan. Scans the entire system. Note that this scan can take up to several hours on some computers.
Customized scan. In addition to a quick scan, the tool will also scan the contents of a user-specified folder.
Choose Folder ...

Default Programs

What does it do?

This Control Panel tool lets you associate file types with specific programs, so when you open a file, a particular program is used to launch it. You can also decide what happens when you insert a disc or removable device, such as playing CDs automatically and copying photos from your camera to your online storage service.

How do I launch it?

In Windows 7 and Vista, the Default Programs option should be listed at the top of your Start menu. You can also find it by going to Control Panel, Programs, Default Programs.

ADVANCED TIP:

To apply your default settings to everyone who uses your computer, click 'Set program access and computer settings'.

Find more Windows tips at forum.webuser.co.uk

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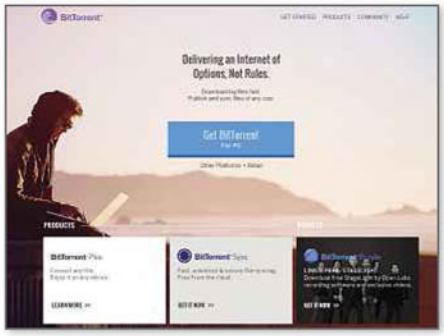
Best legal uses for BitTorrent

Most people associate BitTorrent with illegal downloading and sharing, but the software itself is perfectly legal. **Rob Beattie** explains how to use it and stay on the right side of the law

Download a free torrent client

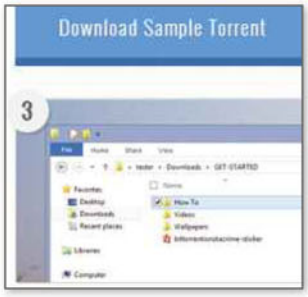
Torrents work by grabbing and sharing bits of files from many different sources at once, from PCs just like yours. To carry out this process, you need a BitTorrent program. There are plenty of good, free ones to choose from, including uTorrent (www.utorrent.com) and Vuze (www.vuze.com). In this feature, we'll be using the official BitTorrent client (www.bittorrent.com), which the company is now promoting as "the world's most efficient way to move media".



Go to the website and follow the instructions to download and install the software, making sure you opt for the free version and not the paid-for BitTorrent Plus, which costs £20.43 per year. Accept the default settings during set-up, but make sure you deselect any unwanted extras. You should remove the tick next to the 'load with Windows' option, or to prevent the software hogging your bandwidth and system resources. It's also worth checking out the Help manual for set-up advice.

Try downloading a legal torrent

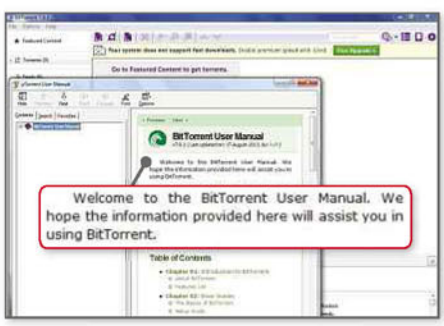
If you've never used BitTorrent before, go to the Get Started page (www.bittorrent.com/get-started), scroll down and click the Download Sample Torrent button. Open your Downloads folder (or wherever files usually get downloaded to), find the GET-STARTED-signed file and drag it to the BitTorrent window. When the Add New Torrent dialogue box appears, leave the other settings as they are and click OK. After a moment or two, BitTorrent will connect to the internet, find other torrent users who are also downloading and sharing this introductory file and start to download it.

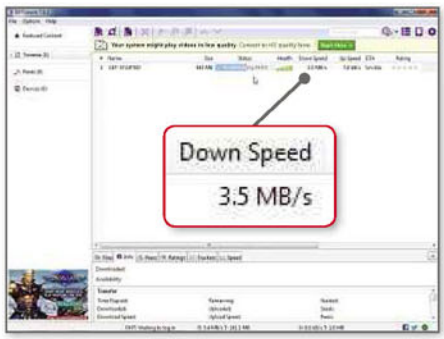


Download speeds vary according to the time of day and the number of people sharing the torrent – in this example, it's downloading at 3.5Mbps. When the file download is complete, open your Downloads folder to see your torrented files – these should consist of a selection of wallpapers, videos and other bits and pieces.

Grab huge games and automatic updates

You may not realise it, but if you're a fan of massive role-playing games such as World of Warcraft, Starcraft and Diablo, then you're BitTorrenting already. That's because Blizzard Entertainment (eu.blizzard.com), the company behind these blockbusters, has built torrenting software into the games. This means that when you download them, you're actually installing the BitTorrent client, which will then download the game for you and subsequently grab any updates and patches as they become available. In most situations this is great, and because it happens automatically you don't have to worry about doing anything yourself. However, if you want


BitTorrent User Manual
Welcome to the BitTorrent User Manual. We hope the information provided here will assist you in using BitTorrent.
Table of Contents



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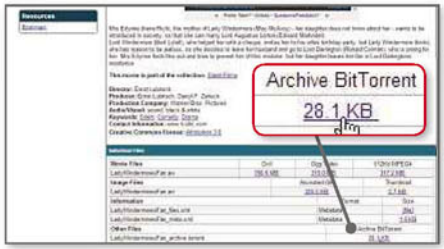
to save bandwidth and would rather files weren't downloading in the background, open the World of Warcraft launcher, go to Options and select Downloader Preferences. Remove the tick next to Enable Peer-to-Peer Transfer to turn off torrenting. If you do this, you have to download updates manually until you turn the option back on again.

Download films from the Internet Archive

The Moving Image Archive at the Internet Archive (archive.org/details/movies) has all manner of films, video, concerts and audio files you can download for free using BitTorrent. Because these are mostly out-of-copyright titles, they're all available legally, and you can even share them without getting in trouble.

To browse the full-length films on offer, scroll down to the Sub-Collections section, choose Movies, then scroll down again and choose Feature Films. Choose a category, select a genre such as Comedy Films and then click a letter to browse by title. Once you've found a film you want to watch, scroll down to the Individual Files section and click the link to Archive BitTorrent to save the torrent file to your Download folder. Drag it from here to your BitTorrent client and it will begin downloading.



Get free entertainment from Humble Bundle

Humble Bundle (www.humblebundle.com) offers collections of games, films, albums and ebooks with a difference: you choose the amount of money you're prepared to pay for the bundle and how much of that should go to the creators, the site and the supported charities. It's a great service, and since the files and bundles are so large, it also uses BitTorrent to share the load and help with the lost connections that often arise when you're downloading something direct. As the Humble Bundle team says: "We strongly recommend the BitTorrent option for large files as there is a risk your download will be interrupted during an extended direct download". Just choose BitTorrent rather than the Direct Download option once you've bought your bundle.

The bundle on offer changes every week – when we visited, it was a collection of seven professional stand-up comedy videos. You can get alerts by email when new bundles are added, or follow the site on social media.

Download a free operating system

BitTorrent is used by Linux Tracker (www.linuxtracker.org), one of the best and most reliable sources of the latest Linux distros (distributions) on the web. Many of these are several gigabytes in size, so BitTorrent provides the perfect means of making them available, and because Linux is open-source, there are no legal worries about downloading them. The site has a strict 'no-thanks' policy about dodgy files and a reputation for staying on top of the multitude of Linux versions that are available for download.

There were more than 500 different torrents when we visited, including new versions of Ubuntu, Simplicity and Manjaro. Just select a torrent file from the download list and away you go.

Immerse yourself in gigapixel photos

BitTorrent is also useful for downloading enormous photos that you can usually only explore online. For example, you can import the whole of the beautiful city of Prague to your PC to sightsee at your leisure. Just go to 360gigapixels.com/petrin-prague-photo to download a 34-gigapixel panoramic image of the Czech Republic's capital city. Scroll down the page to the Creative Commons section in the left-hand column. Click the 'prague34gigapixel.torrent' link to get this extraordinarily

detailed photo, which was shot in May and is 3.94GB in size.

Send files of up to 1TB for free

BitTorrent has launched a new, free service called SoShare (soshareit.com), which lets you send a file or files of up to 1,000GB to a friend. Amazingly, and unlike many file-sharing services, you don't even need to set up an account to send or receive files. Assuming you already have BitTorrent, go to the site, download and install the SoShare plug-in, then select the file(s) to send and click the Send button. Once the process starts, you can pause the upload and start it again, just like any other torrent. The recipient gets an email with a link to download the file(s), which remains active for 15 days.

SO SHARE
Here's a massive file for you!
Add Files
Send
Transfer as many files as you want up to 1 TeraByte.
Send as often as you like!

Download live gigs for free

Looking for live, legal concerts from named and new artists? Go to bt.etree.org, where you'll find thousands of gig recordings from bands and artists including The Grateful Dead, Black Crowes and Emmylou Harris, as well as many less well-known performers. All are available to download and share for free via a BitTorrent client. Use the search field to find an artist, then choose a show and click a torrent name to start downloading.

WorldMags.net

Discuss BitTorrent software at forum.webuser.co.uk

WorldMags

Discover what's new from Yahoo

Yahoo is making a comeback, updating its logo and revamping many services that haven't changed for years. **Robert Irvine** takes a look at its best new tools

View stunning pictures of the weather

Yahoo recently released the Android version of its amazing Weather app (uk.mobile.yahoo.com/weather), which has been available for iOS since April. Rather than just telling you the forecast, the app shows you the weather using high-resolution photos from Flickr. These are based on your location, current conditions and the time of day, but you can choose to only update them via Wi-Fi if you're worried about your data allowance.

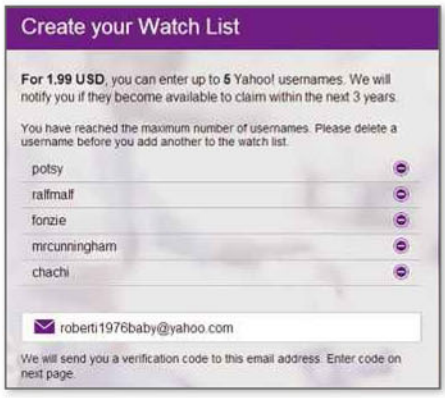
Swipe down from main screen to view a more traditional forecast (five or ten-day) and loads of useful weather information. This includes visibility, humidity, precipitation, wind speed and pressure, and even the sun position and lunar phase. Complete with the handy option to store multiple locations, Yahoo Weather is the one of the best free weather apps we've seen.

Improve camera photos as you take them

Yahoo has updated its Flickr app for iOS (bit.ly/flickrios327) to make the most of your iPhone's camera. Rather than enhancing images after you've taken them, you can now get your shots right first time using the app's ingenious Live Filters feature. This lets you apply effects *before* you take a photo, comparing the original image with how it will look afterwards. You can then capture and edit the finished shot, without losing focus on your subject. Flickr wants this impressive free app to serve as a "complete photo studio", combining an alternative camera with a range of sophisticated editing tools. Let's hope the Android version is similarly updated soon.

Get your ideal Yahoo username

Back in July, Yahoo launched Wish List, which gave users the chance to get the Yahoo ID they always wanted, for example, 'robert@yahoo.com' rather than 'roberti1976baby@yahoo.com'. This was made possible by Yahoo resetting and freeing up IDs from accounts that had been inactive for more than 12 months. As promised, Yahoo dished out the requested names at the end of August, but if you missed the chance to grab yours, you can still get it through Wish List's successor, Watch List (watchlist.yahoo.com). Enter up to five desired usernames and, if any of them becomes available in the next three years, you can have it. The catch is that you need to make an upfront payment of $1.99 (about £1.28) to submit your username requests, although it's free if you originally registered for Wish List.


Create your Watch List
For 1.99 USD, you can enter up to 5 Yahoo! usernames. We will notify you if they become available to claim within the next 3 years.
You have reached the maximum number of usernames. Please delete a username before you add another to the watch list.
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raffmalf
fonzie
mrcunningham
chachi
roberti1976baby@yahoo.com
We will send you a verification code to this email address. Enter code on next page.

Install the new Yahoo browser toolbar

These days, most people prefer individual buttons for their add-ons, but that hasn't stopped Yahoo updating its browser toolbar. The Yahoo Toolbar (uk.toolbar.yahoo.com) offers one-click access to – and notifications from – Yahoo services including Flickr, Mail, Tumblr and Answers, as well as popular websites including eBay, Amazon and Facebook. You can add more options by right-clicking and choosing 'Edit toolbar', and remove any you don't use. There's also a big search box for which Yahoo is, unsurprisingly, the only search engine. The toolbar is available for Firefox, Chrome and Internet Explorer, and though it may seem old-fashioned, it's still useful for managing all Yahoo's main features in one place.

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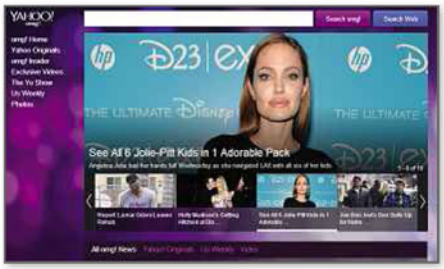
Explore Yahoo's revamped websites

As part of its rejuvenation, Yahoo has redesigned its entertainment and sport sites, which were starting to look a bit staid. The changes to Yahoo Music, Movies, TV and Sports, plus celebrity gossip site OMG (omg.yahoo.com) introduce a tidier, more streamlined layout across the board. This presents the latest stories in a central news feed, with videos and photos on the right, and combines content from across the web with 'Yahoo originals'. At the time of going to press, only Yahoo's US sites had been revamped, but Yahoo UK versions should follow soon.



Check out the redesigned Yahoo Groups

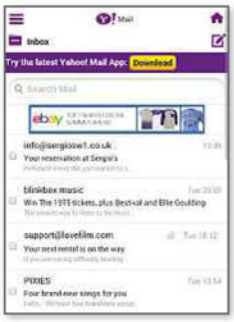
One of Yahoo's most controversial recent changes has been to redesign Yahoo Groups (groups.yahoo.com), its massive collection of online discussion boards. The old design had barely been touched for years, but it's now been "reinvigorated" with a fresh interface (called Neo), a new homepage, threaded conversations and larger photos.

Sadly, these intended improvements have not been greeted warmly by the Yahoo Groups community. "The new format is not user friendly and works poorly," says one of the politer posts in the Feedback forum (bit.ly/yahoofeed327). Yahoo has responded

by saying the new Groups is here to stay, but that it is "listening to all the community feedback, so we can continuously make improvements". Although the site looks more modern, we can understand why some tweaks may have irritated long-term users, such as the large, unrelated images on many groups' pages. But it's certainly worth checking out, although not all users may see the changes yet.

Enjoy a smoother mobile experience

Recognising that not everyone uses smartphone or tablet apps, Yahoo has refreshed the mobile versions of its websites to make them quicker and easier to use on any device. The improvements apply to Yahoo Mail, Finance, Search, Messenger, News and the Yahoo homepage, and focus on maximising screen space, loading pages faster and maintaining the sites' appearance, even on "the most basic feature phone".



Rate or hate the new Yahoo logo

Following its '30 days of change' campaign (www.yahoo.com/dailylogo), which tried a different logo design every day for a month, Yahoo confirmed its new logo on 5 September. Strangely, users weren't given the chance to vote on the options, but a poll by opinion site Polar (polarb.com/polls/tags/yahoo30) found that only one variation was more popular than the existing logo, which Yahoo had used since 1995 (in purple since 2009). This wasn't the one chosen by Yahoo, and the new logo met a rather muted response. "Looks old and boring," said one *Web User* reader on Faceboook.

YAHOO!

YAHOO TIMELINE

Here's a brief summary of how Yahoo's popularity has risen, fallen and risen again over the last 19 years

January 1994 Stanford University students Jerry Yang and David Filo launch a search directory called 'Jerry's Guide to the World Wide Web'

March 1994 'Jerry's Guide...' is renamed Yahoo, which stands for Yet Another Hierarchical Officious Oracle

January 1995 Yahoo goes online at www.yahoo.com

September 1996 Yahoo UK launches at www.yahoo.co.uk

March 1997 Yahoo buys webmail service RocketMail, which later becomes Yahoo Mail

January 2000 At the height of the dotcom boom, Yahoo's stock soars to an all-time high of $475 (£304) per share

June 2000 Yahoo starts using Google to power its search engine

September 2001 Yahoo's stock sinks to a low of $8.11 (£5.20) per share

February 2004 Yahoo stops using Google in favour of its own search technology

March 2005 Yahoo buys photo-sharing site Flickr (www.flickr.com)

May 2008 Microsoft abandons its bid to buy Yahoo for $44.6 billion

March 2012 Yahoo lays off 2,000 employees

July 2012 Marissa Mayer is appointed Yahoo CEO and President

May 2013 Yahoo buys blogging service Tumblr (www.tumblr.com)

July 2013 Yahoo sites receive 196.6 million unique visitors in the US, ahead of Google and Microsoft

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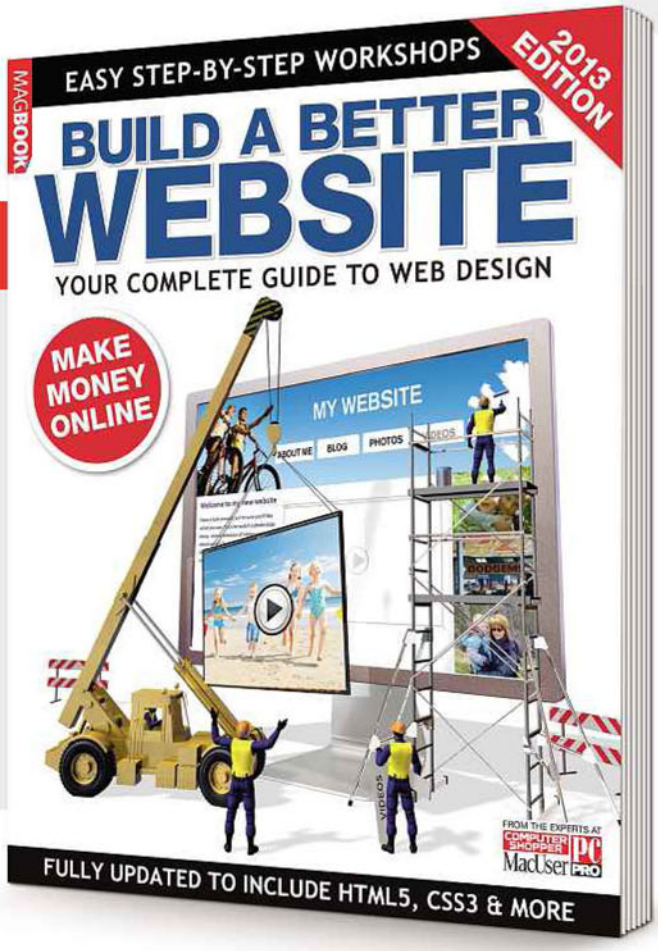

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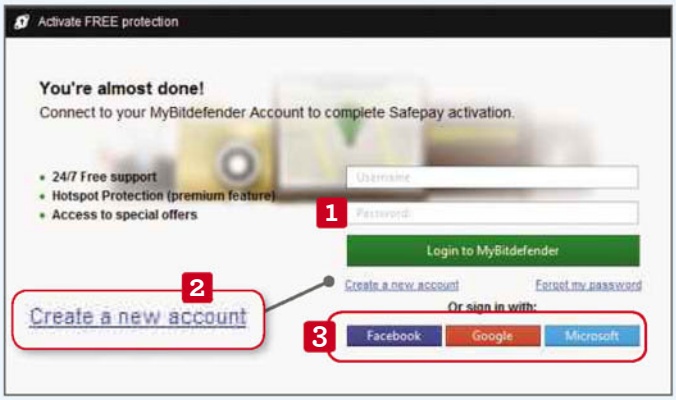
Make your PC hack-proof while banking and shopping

Bitdefender Safepay: bit.ly/safepay327
30 mins | Windows XP/Vista/7/8

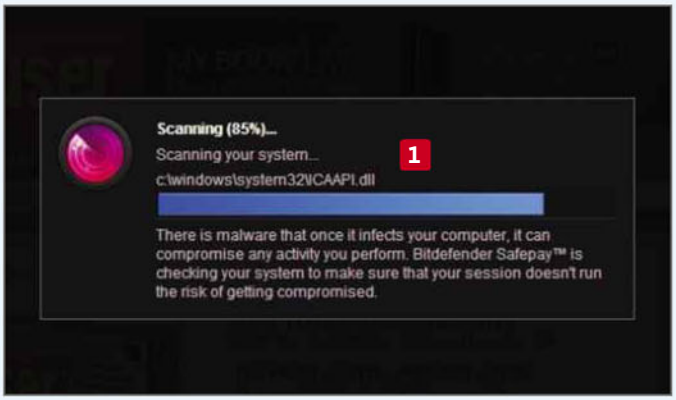
Hackers have many ways to infiltrate your computer and steal your details, but internet security expert Bitdefender knows how to stop them. Its new free tool Safepay protects you on two levels: first by keeping malware off your computer, and second, by making it impossible for anyone to see or record your activity.

Safepay is essentially a browser, but it operates separately from your Desktop and doesn't allow any interaction with any other software. So you won't find any YouTube extensions or screenshot tools, but you can have absolute confidence when typing your passwords, logins and other sensitive data.

In this Workshop, we'll show you how to set up and use Safepay as a secondary browser for online banking, shopping and any other times when you need an extra layer of security.



1 Download and install Bitdefender Safepay. If you have a MyBitdefender Account, enter your username and password. 1 If not, click 'Create a new account', 2 enter your details and confirm your registration by clicking the email link. You can also log in with Facebook, Google or Microsoft. 3


Scanning (85%)...
Scanning your system...
1
c:\windows\system32\CAAPI.dll
There is malware that once it infects your computer, it can compromise any activity you perform. Bitdefender Safepay™ is checking your system to make sure that your session doesn't run the risk of getting compromised.

2 Safepay opens automatically when you confirm your registration. When it opens, it runs an automatic malware scan. 1 You can disable this by clicking the cog icon to open Settings and clicking the 'Scan the system...' slider to OFF. When the scan has finished, click OK to launch the browser.

3 Safepay operates outside Windows, so you can't view it and see your Desktop at the same time. To toggle between Safepay and Windows, click the red triangles: top-left in Safepay 1 and top-right on your Desktop. Safepay doesn't stop running until you click the cross to close it. 2

Bitdefender Safepay™ - Free Windows Downloads
http://hello/
The navigation to http://hello/ failed. 2
Error ERR_NAME_NOT_RESOLVED(105): Unable to resolve the server's DNS address.
http://hello/ 1

4 To open a web page, type its URL into the address box. Safepay automatically prefixes URLs with 'https'. The address box doesn't double as a search box, so if you type in a word such as "hello", 1 you'll get a Navigation Error message. 2

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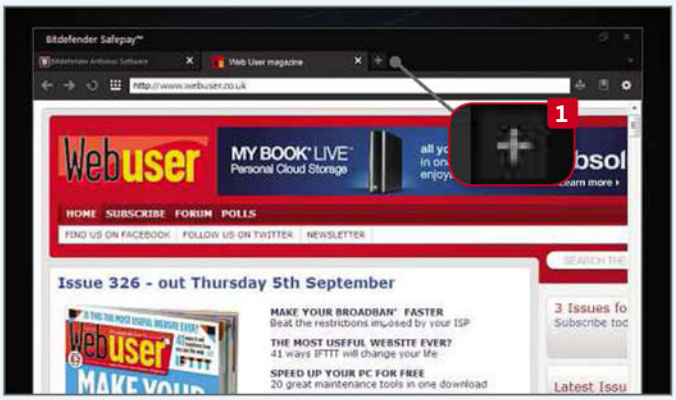
EXPERT TIP

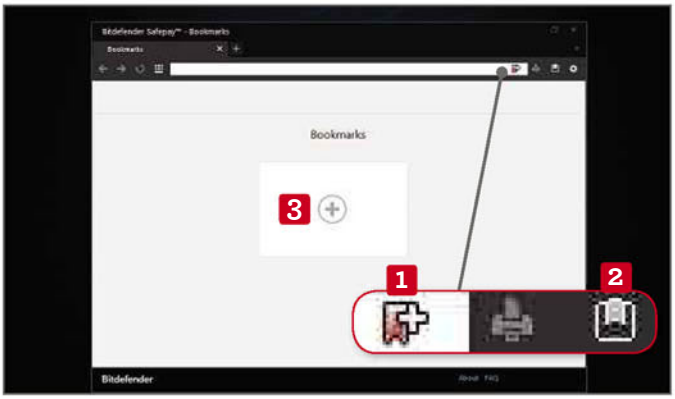
JANE HOSKYN says

Safepay is currently a beta release, so some tools are yet to be perfected and you may experience the occasional crash. You can play a role in its development by suggesting improvements (or airing frustrations) to Bitdefender, but read the beta testers' guide first (bit.ly/safebeta327). For support and contact details, click FAQ in the Safepay window or go to bit.ly/safefaq327 in any other browser.

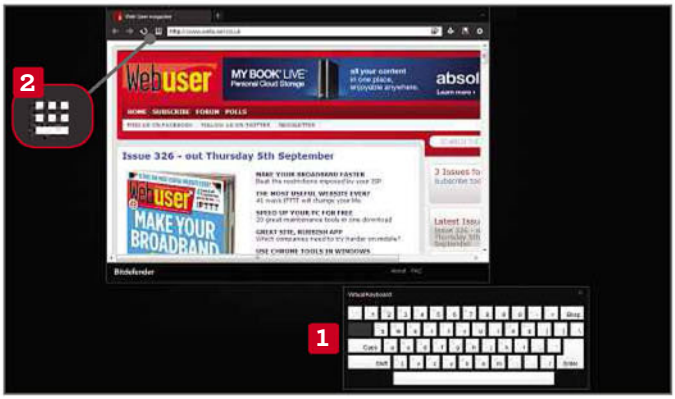
5 By default, Safepay scans all websites for all threats. To speed up browsing, customise the scanning options. Open Settings, go to Scan Websites, 1 click 'Choose filters' 2 and click the ON/OFF sliders 3 to enable or disable scanning for malware, phishing, fraud, untrusted websites and spam.



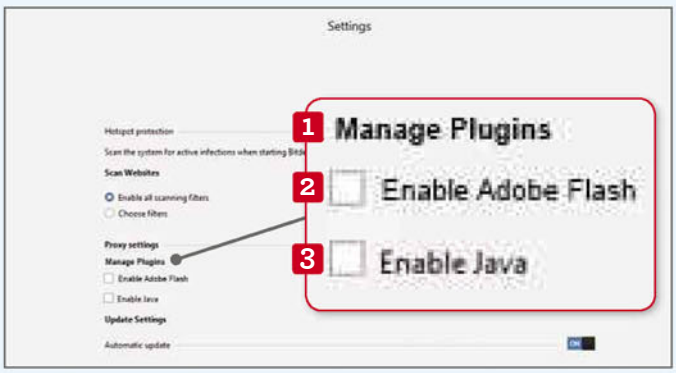
6 Safepay supports tabbed browsing but not context menus, so you can't open a new tab by right-clicking a link. Instead, click the plus icon on an empty tab 1 and type the URL. To view all open tabs, click the arrow to the right of the address box. To close a tab, click its cross icon.



7 To save your current page as a bookmark, click the red icon in the address box. 1 On the Bookmarks page, enter a bookmark title and click Save. To open the Bookmarks page at any time, click the bookmark icon on the Safepay toolbar 2 and add a new bookmark by clicking the plus sign. 3



8 Safepay prevents keylogging by letting you type logins, bank details and other valuable details using a virtual keyboard. 1 Click the keyboard icon 2 to open it and click characters to type them. This only works in online text fields, not your browser's address bar.



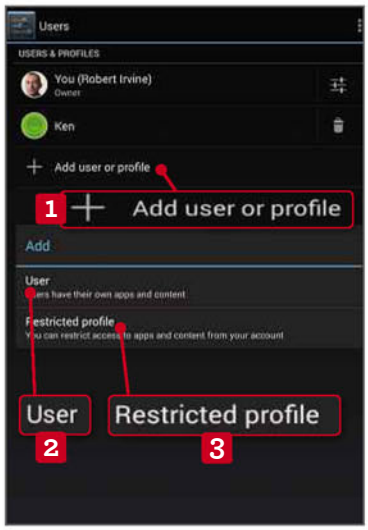
9 Third-party browser extras such as add-ons and screenshots are not supported in Safepay, but you can enable Java and Flash in Settings. Navigate to Manage Plugins, 1 click the tick boxes next to 'Enable Adobe Flash' 2 and 'Enable Java', 3 and click them again to disable.

10 The Settings page includes a 'Hotspot protection' option 1 to guard against unsecured Wi-Fi networks, but you can only use this in the paid-for version. However, this is the only element that you can't use in the free service.

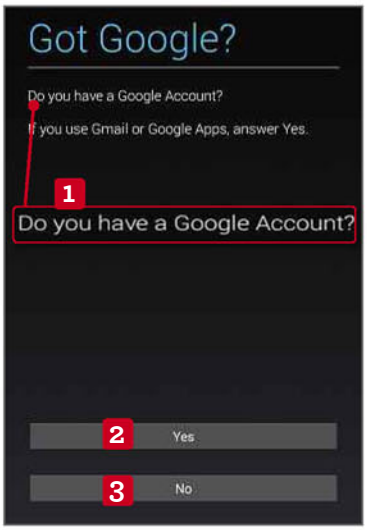
Set up separate user accounts on one tablet

Just because you share your Android tablet with other people, doesn't mean you have to give them access to your personal data. The guest-accounts tool in Android 4.2 (Jelly Bean) lets you share your tablet without sharing your stuff. Here, we show you how to set up separate user accounts on the same device.

Android guest accounts | **20 mins** | **Android 4.2+, tablets only**



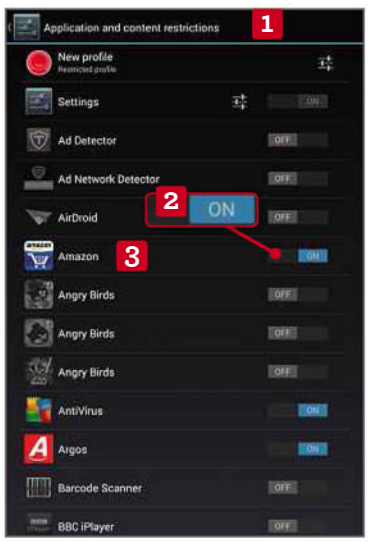
1 To create a second user account on your tablet, go to Settings, Users, 'Add user or profile' 1 and tap User. 2 If you're running Android 4.3 or later, you'll also see a 'Restricted profile' option 3 which we'll look at in Step 5. Tap OK and 'Set up now'. To switch to the new account, return to the lock screen. Unlock it by swiping the lock icon down.



2 Pass your tablet to your guest, who will be prompted to sign into or create a Google account. 1 They have to do one or the other, so they should tap Yes. 2 You can't bypass this step by tapping No 3 and 'Not now', because this loops you round to another Google sign-in screen. Only guests using restricted profiles (see Step 5) are exempt from needing a Google account.

3 Once your guest has signed in, they'll be taken to their own Google home screen. 1 By default, it includes a huge My Library widget. This can be removed by tapping, holding and dragging it to the top of the screen. Some default apps appear at the bottom of the screen. 2 Tap the apps icon 3 for more apps, and tap and hold an app's icon to pin it to the home screen. 4

4 Your guest is automatically logged into Google apps, so they can download Play Store content to your tablet, but only to their account. You can both sign into the same app using your separate accounts, but you should each create screen locks to ensure private access. Tap Settings, Security, 'Screen lock', choose your lock type 1 (it's set to Slide by default) and enter a code. 2



5 If you're running Android 4.3 or later, you can set up a restricted profile with limited app access, similar to a parental-control tool on a PC. Only you, as the tablet owner, can do this. Tap 'Add user or profile' (see Step 1) and 'Restricted profile' to open 'Application and content restrictions'. 1 Tap the sliders 2 to enable specific apps. 3 The restricted user won't be able to make any in-app purchases.

6 Guest accounts are currently only available on Android tablets. There are phone apps for creating guest accounts, such as SwitchMe, but they require root access, which we don't recommend in case it breaks your phone. However, AppLock (bit.ly/applock327) is root-free, costs nothing and lets you set up user-specific restrictions on any device running Android 2.1 or later.

Get more practical advice at forum.webuser.co.uk
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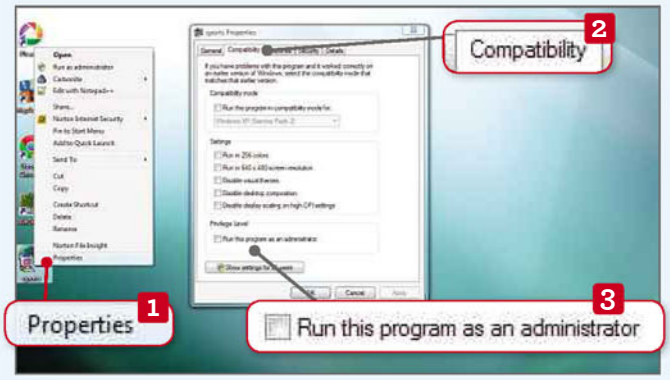
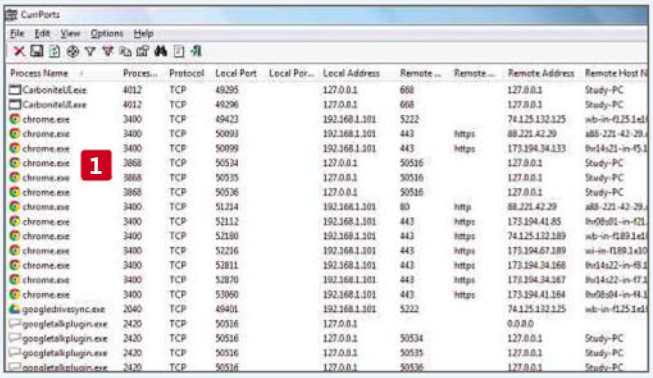
Find and stop unwanted bandwidth hogs

CurrPorts will show you all the programs on your PC, including those running in the background that are currently connected to the internet. You can use it to identify malware that's reporting on your activities and spot unwanted software you don't want hogging your bandwidth.

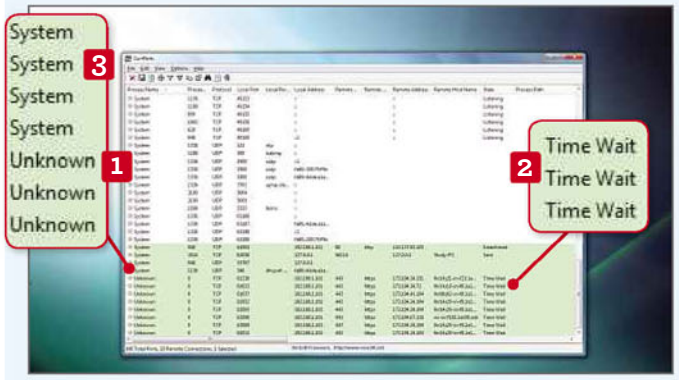
CurrPorts: www.nirsoft.net/utils/cports.html | 5 mins | XP, Vista, 7, 8

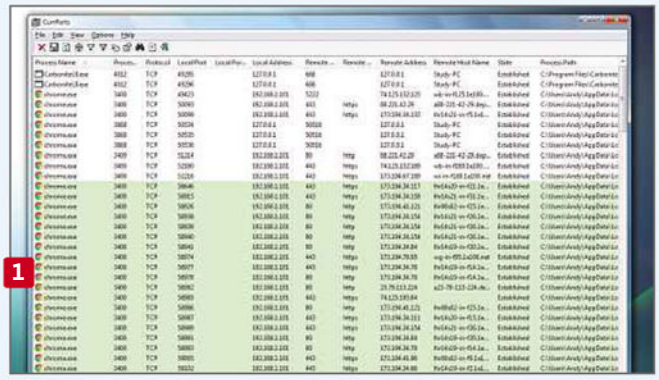




1 The software is portable, so you don't need to install it; just copy the cports.exe file to any folder. You need to run the software as an administrator, so right-click, select Properties, 1 click the Compatibility tab 2 and tick the option to 'Run this program as an Administrator'. 3

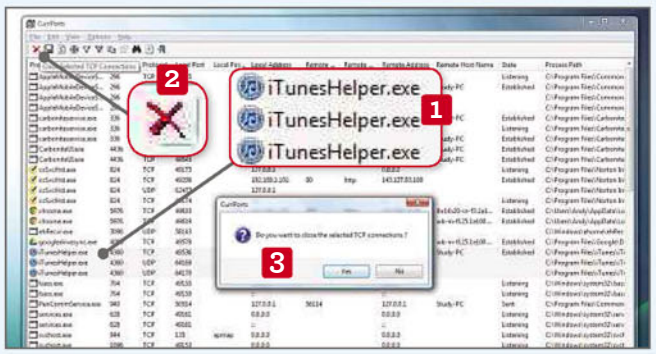
2 CurrPorts lists all the software that has a connection to the internet. If you see more than one instance of a program, 1 it just means the software is using multiple connections. Tabbed browsers such as Chrome will be listed several times, for each tab and add-on running.

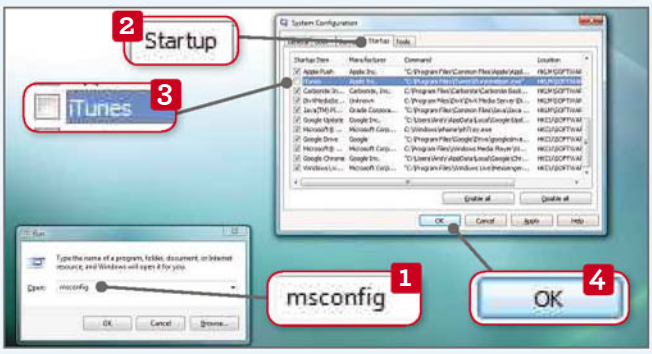




3 At the bottom of the list, you'll see Unknown processes, 1 with Time Wait in the State column. 2 Don't worry about these – they're processes that have been shut down and are waiting to be closed. You'll also see a lot of System processes, 3 which you can also ignore.

4 Processes highlighted green are currently active but considered safe. 1 If you see something highlighted in pink, investigate it immediately – this is a process that CurrPorts is flagging up as suspicious. Shut the process down (see Step 5) and run a virus scan.





5 If you see a program you don't want running, highlight all instances of it 1 and click the Close button. 2 You'll be asked for confirmation. 3 If it's a process that runs with Windows, you can only stop this occurance – CurrPorts can't block software from running next time.

6 To stop a program running in the future, so it doesn't restart when you launch Windows, press Windows+R, type `msconfig` 1 and press Enter. Click the Startup tab, 2 find the process you want to stop and untick it. 3 Click OK 4 and the process will no longer start automatically.

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Your top tips

Our pick of the best advice from our readers. To get help or offer it to others, visit forum.webuser.co.uk

BROWSERS

Block webmail ads

Adverts may help to pay for my webmail service, but they're irritating, and I'm sure that Google has been showing me more and more ads in Gmail. However, I've found some Firefox add-ons that do a decent job of blocking them: Webmail Ad Blocker for sidebar ads in Gmail, Hotmail, Outlook.com and Yahoo Mail (bit.ly/admail327); and Ad-blocker for Gmail (bit.ly/adgmail327). There is also a Chrome version of Webmail Ad Blocker (bit.ly/adchrome327).

I was worried that Webmail Ad Blocker would clash with Adblock Plus, which I also use in Firefox (bit.ly/adblock327) to block ads on YouTube and other websites. But there's no interference at all – in fact they complement each other. For example, Adblock Plus removed the ads from Yahoo Mail, leaving a big white space down one side, but Webmail Ad Blocker got rid of this. With Gmail, you may need to go to Options and untick People Widget to remove the white space to the right of your messages.

Madeline, Web User Forums

Ditch Gmail or Hotmail ads with Webmail Ad Blocker

BROWSERS

Disable YouTube ads without plug-ins

There are plenty of ways to disable ads in YouTube, but if you'd rather avoid plug-ins, you can use the developer console instead. Open a YouTube video, press Ctrl+Shift+J in Chrome (Ctrl+Shift+K in Firefox) and click Console. There should be a flashing cursor in the main console panel. Type the code: `document.cookie="VISITOR_INFO1_LIVE=oKckVSqvaGw; path=/;domain=.youtube.com";window.location.reload()` and press Enter. This will immediately remove the ads in the current video and any others you watch in this session.

Arney, Web User Forum

TOP TIP

£25 winner

VIDEO

Sync VLC audio

VLC Media Player (www.videolan.org/vlc) is one of my favourite programs, so I was really glad that you featured its iPhone app in your last issue (bit.ly/webuser326). I don't know if this works on the app, but the Windows program has a great trick for getting the audio and video back in sync on any downloaded video file (a problem that often seems to occur when I rip DVDs). Play the video in VLC and press the J key to move the audio back 50 milliseconds. K moves it forward by the same amount. Keep pressing until the audio and video are in sync.

Press J or K in VLC to move the audio track into sync with the video

Roger Sleaford, via email

BROWSERS

Access Firefox permissions

It always baffles me that programmers hide away useful software features. For example, in Firefox, you can type `about:permissions` in the address box to display a list of all the websites you have accessed. If you select one, you'll see a list on the right of the things the site can do. For instance, it might be able to store passwords, share your location, set cookies, open pop-up windows, store files offline and so on. You can choose what a site is allowed to do. With Share Location, for example, there is Allow, Block and Always Ask.

It would be tedious to set every site individually, so selecting All Sites at the top of the list on the left sets them in one go. For example, select All Sites and set 'Share Location to Block' to prevent sites accessing your location information.

Steve Woodman, via email

IOS

Close background apps

I'd had my iPhone for months before I realised that tapping the Home button didn't stop apps from running, or from sucking up my battery life. Now I use some quick steps to close apps that run in the background. First, double-tap the Home button to open a row of app icons at the bottom of the screen. Drag them to the left to scroll through your currently running apps. You'll be surprised by how many there are! Tap and hold any of the icons and they'll all start to shake, as they do when you move or delete them from the main screen. Tap the red minus button next to any app you want to close. This doesn't delete the app, but stops it running. After closing a few apps, you'll be amazed at how much faster your phone runs and how much longer your battery lasts. It works on the iPad too.

Close running apps to conserve your battery

Vista, Web User Forums

GENERAL PC

Quickly access foreign characters

I liked the reader's tip on how to type a Euro symbol (€) using Ctrl+Alt+E in Issue 324 (bit.ly/webuser324). If you use a lot of 'unusual' characters, press Windows+R, type `charmap` and press

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Enter. This opens a window full of special characters such as the copyright symbol, arrows, shapes and more, and they'll automatically open in your default font. You can choose a different font to open a whole new set of symbols, but I found that when I tried copying and pasting a symbol from a different font into Word, it converted back to my default font. Even so, it's a very useful tool with a great Help section.

B Kendrick, via email

Use Character Map in Windows to find special characters and symbols

GENERAL PC

Turn off auto-arrange

I sometimes have trouble controlling the mouse, and the way that windows are automatically rearranged if you drag one too close to the screen edge is annoying. Drag it off the top and it maximises the window, while the left and right edges make the window half a screen wide.

To turn this off, press Windows+R and type `regedit` then press Enter. In the left pane, go to HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Control Panel\Desktop. Double-click WindowArrangementActive on the right and set the value to zero. Quit the Registry Editor and restart Windows. Now windows won't automatically rearrange and resize when you go near the edges.

R Laker, via email

TELEVISION

Get BT Sport working again

I tried to watch a baseball game on BT Sport but got this error message: "You have reached your maximum number of concurrent streams: VC010".

I followed a link to the FAQ which said: "This is because you have more than two streams running. Stop all streams and try again. You may need to wait a few minutes before you can start another stream." This sounds like gobbledegook to me, not least because I didn't have any other streams open. What's more, the problem resolved itself after I went away for a few minutes. So if this happens to you, go off and have a coffee, then click Watch on whatever you were watching and the stream should be fine.

George, Web User Forums

GENERAL PC

More menu options

Most people know that when you right-click an icon on the taskbar, the menu shows tasks, menus and jump lists. But if you hold down the Shift key as you right-click a taskbar icon, you get a completely different menu with new options. These include 'Run as administrator', 'Open file location' to open an Explorer window, and 'Run as different user'. That last one is handy when my son is logged on as a limited user and I need to do something that only an administrator can do. It prompts you to enter your username and password and runs the program as if you were logged into your own account.

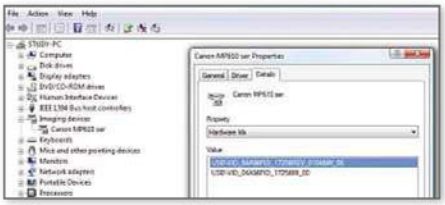
Dave Baker, via email

GENERAL PC

Easy driver updates

Here's a tip I found on Reddit (bit.ly/reddit327) after trying to find a driver for an old printer. 'Press Windows+R, type `devmgmt.mscn` and press Enter. Right-click the device you need a driver for and click Properties. Under Details, you should see the Device ID, which you can then copy into Google to find the driver you're after. If you can't find the Device ID, the website PCIDatabase (www.pcidatabase.com) lets you search by device type to find drivers online.

Claire Slater, via email



Find a device's ID details if you need to track down its driver

GENERAL PC

Wait for 'OK to Remove'

It feels like a waste of time to click Safely Remove Hardware and wait for your PC to eject whatever USB device you've got plugged in. I never used to bother and it never did any harm – until I lost a load of photos that I'd stuck on a USB for printing. At first I wasn't convinced that it was all down to Safely Remove, but I did a search online and found out what is going on. When you eject a drive, your computer needs to finish what it was doing with the drive. It doesn't actually complete your tasks (such as transfer a file) when you request them, but it caches them until you click Eject or Safely Remove Hardware or whatever. Then it fulfils all your requests in one go and stops background programs from accessing the drive. If you yank out a drive before these processes have finished, you interrupt it and risk destroying all the data stored on it.

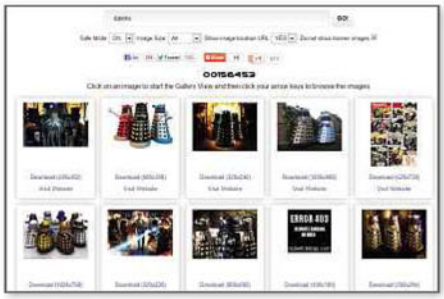
Gavin Thompson, via email

SEARCH

Easy Google Images search

You have to go through an annoying two-step process to look at the full-size version of thumbnails in Google's image search. Google Image Ripper (www.googleimageripper.com) makes this less time-consuming. When your results appear, their size and source link are shown too, and you can also view a gallery of full-size images without having to click them one by one. It's completely web-based, so you don't have to download anything.

H Fox, via email



Google Image Ripper adds a full-size gallery to Google's image search results

GENERAL PC

Change your Desktop icons

You don't have to stick with dull default folder icons and shortcuts. To change an icon, right-click a shortcut, click Properties, click Change Icon and choose from the list of available icons.

Alternatively, after clicking Change Icon, click Browse to choose an icon from your computer's system files. The 'Windows\System32' folder contains lots of icons, particularly the DLL files such as ieframe.dll and imageres.dll.

The steps are the same for changing your folder icons, but I did have trouble previewing the contents of a folder after I did this. I think these steps also work in Vista and Windows 8, but the System32 folder might be different.

J Mitchell, via email

If you see words that `look like they've been typed in a typewriter`, follow the instructions and type them exactly as they appear, paying close attention to spaces and punctuation.

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Readers' helpdesk

Our pick of the best solutions posted on our reader forums. Visit forum.webuser.co.uk – it's friendly and free!

HARDWARE

Which desktop PC should I get?

Q It's about time I replaced my Dell Dimension 3000 PC with something more up to date. I have no special requirements – I just want a good and trustworthy desktop computer with plenty of space and speed. Also, which OS is the best for replacing my much-loved XP?

Cauldbum, Web User Forums

A A lot of new computers come with Windows 8 pre-installed, but as an XP devotee, you may prefer Windows 7. Luckily, there are still plenty of new Windows 7 PCs available. A quick Google search for 'win 7 new desktop' found a number of links to suppliers, including Argos, Maplin and Amazon, and buyers' guides such as bit.ly/win7pc327 and bit.ly/winpc327. The latter is a US site, but its advice is very thorough.

I can't give much advice on brands, but I've read on forums that Asus make the best motherboards and OEM machines often have low-end power supply units fitted. I wouldn't get too hung up on brand names. Look at the specs for computers that match your budget and read the user reviews. Ultimately, the best buy is the one with a price and description you feel most comfortable with.

Cantrel, Web User Forums

WINDOWS 8

How do I fix this shutdown error?

Q I wonder if anyone can explain a problem I had with my Toshiba l855 Windows 8 laptop. I tried shutting it down but it went into Sleep Mode and wouldn't wake up. I took out the battery, put it back and was able to boot the laptop, but I got 'configuring your system' messages from Toshiba and Windows, and it took a long time to start. When I finally got in, everything worked fine.

I've since looked in Event Viewer and found an entry for that date, with the description: "Windows detected your registry file is still in use by other applications or services. The file will be unloaded now. The applications or services that hold your registry file may not function properly afterwards."

What happened and what effects might it have had? I use Windows Defender (bit.ly/defender327) and don't visit dodgy sites.

Harleygjc, Web User Forums

A A similar thing happened when I first got Windows 8 and made the mistake of switching my computer off at the mains before it had completely shut down. This was always fine in Windows 7, but with Windows 8 you have to make sure that the drives and fans have stopped whirring before you switch off the power supply. I think your problem must be Windows 8's standard response to a bad shutdown.

You can change Windows 8 shutdown settings from the Control Panel

As to why your laptop didn't shut down properly, this seems to be a problem with Windows 8's default settings. Web User Forum member Reena posted a useful tip about this in January (bit.ly/win8shut327).

To change the settings, go to Control Panel, 'Hardware and Sound', Power Options, then 'Choose what the power buttons do'. If the tick boxes under 'Shutdown settings' aren't ticked, click 'Change settings that are currently unavailable' and choose your preferred shutdown settings.

Mart and Spiraleye, Web User Forums

PRIVACY

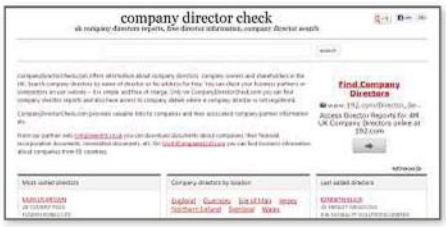
How did I find this person's details so easily?

Q I searched online for an old friend's email address and immediately found a link providing me with his full home address and date of birth, plus the news that he is now director of his own company. Why is this information so freely available? Don't people have any option to keep things secret?

To double-check, I typed in my cousin's name, and up came his company name and personal details. I was easily able to find all this information from well-established, above-board websites, including www.companydirectorcheck.com and www.companiesintheuk.co.uk. How come?

Vista, Web User Forums

A All companies must be registered with Companies House, and registration requires that all directors have their details published on the Companies House website. This information is subsequently shared on the kind of websites you mention, for a very good reason: people need to be able to check whether an individual has been in financial or legal trouble when running current or previous companies.



Company directors must make their contact details available to the public

There are certain exceptions, such as directors of companies that deal with particularly sensitive issues (women's refuges, drugs rehabilitation centres and so on). Directors can also request that only the company's registered address is shown instead of their home address. Anyone who registers a company must follow these rules.

Greysts, Web User Forums

GENERAL PC

How do I move a file without changing its date?

Q If I move or copy a Word file to a new folder, Windows automatically assigns it the current date. Is there a way

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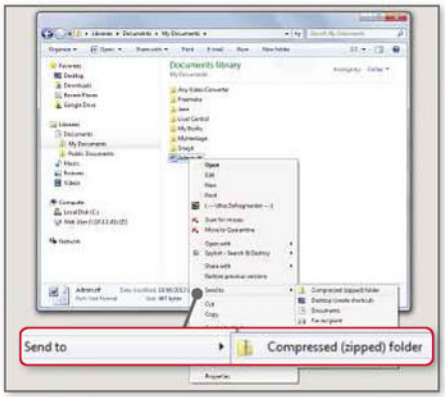
to keep the original 'Date Created', as assigned in the old folder?

Joe_London, Web User Forums

A There's only one way to do this: zip the file before moving it, and unzip it in the destination folder. The date will stay the same.

Sneakybeaky, Web User Forums



Zip a Word file to move it and keep its created date unchanged

SECURITY

How did this program get on my computer?

Q I've just noticed some new software called Trusteer End Protection on my computer. I've discovered that it was installed a couple of days ago, but I haven't installed anything from Trusteer and no-one else has access to my computer. During a search, I found out that Trusteer End Protection is linked to online banking. I do all my banking online but hadn't visited my bank's website on the day the software installed.

Could someone have installed this software on my computer without my knowledge or permission? How do I know if it's safe? It felt suspicious, so I deleted it.

Jo2K, Web User Forums

A I doubt that the real thing could have been installed without your knowledge, so you are right to be suspicious. I recently installed some software from Trusteer (www.trusteer.com) and it wasn't easy – I had to be online throughout and had to click a couple of links in the installer to download the full program.

Have you checked your Downloads folder? Any genuine download of Trusteer will have been placed there first and, assuming you haven't deleted it, should still be there. Run an anti-virus scan and a malware scan (use the free version of Malwarebytes from www.malwarebytes.org) and see whether it turns up anything.

FratPark, Web User Forums

GENERAL PC

Why so many start-up attempts?

Q Over the past week, my computer has been taking up to five attempts to start up. I usually get a message saying something like, "a fault has been detected and the computer is being shut down to prevent further damage."

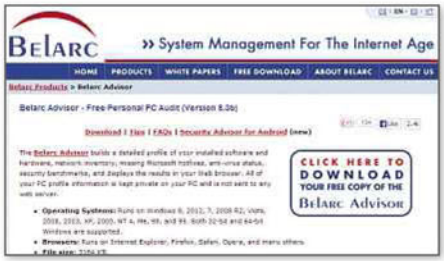
Going back to a previous restore point doesn't work. The restore points I have are System Checkpoint and Software Distribution Service. Do you have any advice?

Davidchart, Web User Forums

A First, boot into 'Safe Mode with Networking' to see if you still have the same problem. If booting this way works fine, your computer may have an infection. I'd advise a visit to the Web User Forum's Hijack This section (bit.ly/hijack327). The 'Read before posting' thread at the top tells you all you need to know.

If your computer seems to be clean, boot into Safe Mode again and select 'Repair your Computer'. After you've set the keyboard language and confirmed the computer name, select Startup Repair from the repair options. Ignore the option to Restore and click Next to view the report, where you'll find out if the repair was successful or not, and the reasons why. If that doesn't do it, and you have an install disc, try booting with that.

You haven't said which operating system you're using, but the process is usually similar for all versions. Select Repair, click Cmd Prompt and type `sfc /scannow /offbootdir=C:\ /offwindir=C:\Windows`, noting the space before each forward slash. Press Enter. If Windows is installed on a different drive, change 'C' to the relevant letter.



Download the Belarc Advisor to find your product key and other system information

If you don't have the installation CD, Microsoft may supply you with one for a fee. Should you need the product key, download Belarc Advisor (www.belarc.com) to find it for you.

If you're having trouble getting online, it may help to update your network drivers. Google your motherboard number for a list of other drivers that need updating. If you decide to update all the applicable drivers, start with the chipset. You can also try looking for the Last Known Good Configuration in the F8 options, and check in Event Viewer for anything relating to your start-up problems.

To quickly check if any of your OS files are damaged, type `cmd chkdsk` in the command prompt to run a file check in read-only mode and get a report. A clean boot may also identify a conflict. How to do a clean boot will depend on your OS, so Google it and follow the steps.

Cantrel, Web User Forums

GENERAL PC

How do I reformat my hard drive?

Q I'm thinking of reformatting my Gateway PC because of its many problems. My Windows 7 hard drive is currently in two partitions: C (512GB) and J (406GB). I'd like to change it so that C only contains the OS, J doesn't change, M contains all my documents and pictures, and R is my recovery partition, so that I never need to go through this again. Is this possible and, if so, how do I go about it?

Alant, Web User Forums

A Yes, it's possible. You can format the C drive by reinstalling Windows 7 on it. You'll need to boot your PC with the Windows 7 DVD in the drive, then follow the links to delete the existing partition (C) and reinstall Windows on it. You'll then need additional software (such as Partition Manager 2013 Free, bit.ly/pm327) to resize J so that you've got enough space on the hard drive to create two new partitions (M and R).

Reinstall Windows 7 to reformat your C drive

Greysts, Web User Forums

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Ask the Experts

Web User answers all your technical questions.
Email us for help at webuser@dennis.co.uk

TABLETS

Nexus 7 is too quiet

Q Can you offer any advice on increasing the volume on a Nexus 7? I have downloaded a lot of apps and nothing seems to work very well. I like the tablet and it is great value for money, except for the sound. I'm a bit on the deaf side, so even with earphones it's not good. I would pay to have the sound boosted if that was possible.

George Allsop, via email

A Tablets have small speakers with limited sound output and the Nexus 7 is no exception. Earphones are usually the answer and should improve the sound compared to a built-in speaker. If this is not sufficient, you should buy a set of external speakers with a built-in amplifier.

Boost the audio output of your mobile device with Logitech speakers

There are dozens to choose from, and the power output ranges from 2W to over 200W. Choose stereo speakers or a 2.1 system and make sure it accepts input from a 3.5mm audio jack socket. Most do. Logitech (www.logitech.com/en-gb) and Creative (uk.creative.com) both have a good range of speakers.

If you don't want to be troubled by cables, consider a speaker that will work with Bluetooth, which will play your tablet's sound wirelessly.

SECURITY

Windows XP safety

Q Next year, Microsoft will no longer support Windows XP and there will be no more security updates. Not all of us can afford to upgrade our computers or operating systems, so will it still be safe to bank and shop online with XP if I use an internet security suite, such as Norton Internet Security (uk.norton.com)? In other words, would Norton or similar provide all the security necessary when Windows XP's updates stop?

Peter Bailey, via email

A Each new version of Windows has better security, so Windows 8 is better than 7, which is better than Vista and XP. There's a fundamental difference between the security of Windows 8 and XP, which makes it harder for security software to lock it down. If a security flaw is discovered in XP and Microsoft doesn't patch it when support ends, will Norton protect you? We don't know, but we'd feel safer running the latest version of Windows with up-to-date security software than an operating system with un-patched security flaws, even with Norton running. Only time will tell, but

Even security software such as Norton might struggle to secure Windows XP

by running an unsupported version of Windows, you will be taking greater risks with your security.

HARDWARE

Fixing a dropped drive

Q I was watching ITV Player on my Dell Studio One 1909 when it toppled about 18 inches onto carpet. The hard drive was corrupted by the fall so I took it out, put it in a caddy and reformatted it. The computer now says "Hard disk drive read failure. No boot device available". I tried to install Windows 8 Pro to re-write the files and drivers, but it wouldn't load. The computer previously had Vista Home installed. Can you suggest a solution?

J Simcock, via email

A If a computer falls onto the floor, carpeted or not, it is quite likely to cause the hard drive to break. If it's physically damaged, then no amount of reformatting and reinstalling Windows will solve the problem. The only option with a hardware failure is replacement. If the drive survived the fall, however, and it simply corrupted some files, then it can be fixed.

Presumably, you have a second computer, which was used to format the drive. Reattach it and format it again, then copy lots of files to it to check reading and writing. If it's OK, test the disk surface.

In Windows 7, click Start, Computer, right-click the hard drive and select Properties. Click 'Check now' on the Tools tab. Tick both boxes in the next window and click Start.

In Windows 8, go to the Start screen, type `command`, right-click Command Prompt and, at the bottom, click 'Run as administrator'. Type `chkdsk D: /R` (change the D to whatever the drive letter is). This checks that each sector of the drive can be read. If it passes all these tests, the drive is OK and Windows should install. The PC will struggle with 64-bit Windows 8 so 32-bit Windows 7 is the best choice.

SOFTWARE

Paste more efficiently

Q During the course of my work using Word with Windows 7, I often need to insert identical blocks of text into various different reports. It would be really useful if I could program a key, such as a function key, to insert these text blocks quickly. Currently, I have to open up a Word document that has these paragraphs of text in. I then cut and paste as required. It's a laborious process and I can't help but feel that there must be a neater solution.

Mark Aitken, via email

A There are several ways to do this and one is to use the clipboard. Multiple items can be stored on the clipboard and you can click and paste any item into a document.

At the start of an editing session, go to the Home tab in the ribbon and click the little arrow in the bottom right

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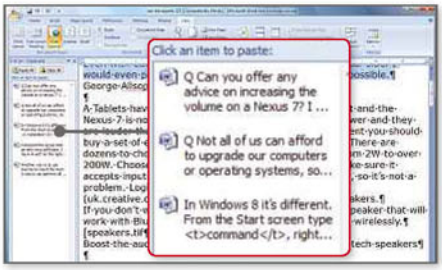

Click an item to paste:
Q Can you offer any advice on increasing the volume on a Nexus 7? I ...
Q Not all of us can afford to upgrade our computers or operating systems, so...
In Windows 8 it's different. From the Start screen type <t>command</t>, right...

The clipboard in Word can hold more than one block of text

corner of the Clipboard section. This opens a panel on the left. Each block of text you copy will be placed in a list in the clipboard panel. You can then load documents and double-click any item in the clipboard to paste it in. Having everything in a list saves time and effort.

Another way to insert text is to use macros. A macro can perform various actions, including inserting text. Go to the View tab on the ribbon, click the arrow below Macros and select Record Macro. Click Keyboard, then press Ctrl+Shift+A. Any key combination is OK as long as it's not used for something else. Click Assign and Close. Type `hello` then return to the View tab, click the arrow under Macros and select Stop Recording. Click Macros, select the macro and click Edit. Find where it says "hello" and replace this with one of your blocks of text. Paste it or type it, whichever is easier. Click Save and close the window.

Now you have a macro to insert a block of text. Press Ctrl+Shift+A and the text block will be inserted into the document. Create macros for all the other blocks of text and put them on different keys. You can now insert them with a key press.

SECURITY

Anti-virus compatibility

Q I enjoyed the Group Test on anti-virus software in Issue 323 (bit.ly/webuser323). I have Avast on my laptop and Microsoft Security Essentials on a desktop PC, both running Windows 7. I believe some time ago you did a piece on Avast and how you could load this anti-virus software with others. I have gone through all my issues of *Web User*, but can't find the piece.

Nick Phipps, via email

A When you run the Avast installer, it displays a big Express Install button, and below it is a small custom install link. Click this for a choice of minimal, typical and custom installs. Select Custom on the left and all the security components are listed with tick boxes, so you can choose what to install. Clear the tick next to 'Real-time shields' to disable the File Shield, Mail Shield, Web Shield and so on. This should enable it to work alongside other anti-virus software.

With all the shields turned off, Avast will not automatically block malware, but you can still scan your PC for viruses manually or schedule a scan to run every day or every week.

You can install other anti-virus programs alongside your existing security software, such as Ad-Aware Free Antivirus+ (www.lavasoft.com), which automatically detects other security software and installs in compatible mode, if it finds any.

BROWSERS

Chrome won't quit

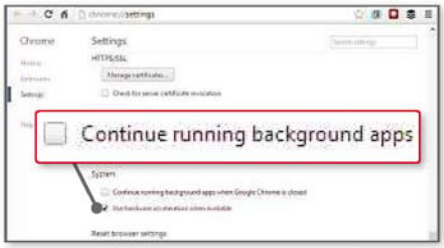
Q I love Chrome, but it's annoying that it still appears to be running in the background, even when I close it. I know this because when I run CCleaner, it tells me I need to shut down Chrome, even though I've already done it. I then need to force it to close. Is this a common problem?

Zack Jenkin, via email

A The reason why Chrome continues to run in the background is because of extensions and web apps. Some open pages are hidden from view, but if you right-click the taskbar and select Task Manager, you'll see Chrome running on the Processes tab. Run Chrome, click the menu button and select Tools, 'Task manager' to see a list of hidden tasks running in the background. These may be providing useful services, so you might want to leave everything as it is.

If you do want to completely shut down Chrome, go to the menu and select Settings. Click 'Show advanced settings'. Scroll down to the bottom and clear the tick against 'Continue running background apps when Google Chrome is closed'. If it's running, Google Cloud Print also needs to be disabled. Click 'Disconnect printers'.

This might be sufficient, but if not, click the menu button, Tools, Extensions. Disable all the extensions. If you now click Quit on the menu button, Chrome will stop running completely.



To quit Chrome completely, stop background apps from running

SECURITY

Security software and Windows 8

Q You say Windows 8 is very secure but presumably I still need to add extra security to my new laptop. Security software confuses me because some of the free brands get good reviews, but isn't it the case that you get what you pay for? I'm on a tight budget and would like to use, say, Avast, but not if it's false economy.

Maureen Coleman, via email

A When people say Windows 8 is very secure, they mean compared to older versions of Windows. Windows 8 is more secure than XP because many of XP's vulnerabilities have been removed or locked down, so it's immune from many of the malware and hacker attacks that are used to gain access to XP. Windows 8 is therefore safer, but not completely safe to use without security software.

Free security software doesn't have as many tools as paid-for software

The difference between free and paid-for security software is in the range of security modules provided. Both detect viruses well, but full security suites offer a lot more besides basic protection. For example, Avast Premier does everything Avast Free Antivirus does, but it also has extra features like SafeZone, Silent Firewall, AntiSpam, AccessAnywhere and Data Shredder. It is a similar story with other companies that have free and paid-for versions.

Examine the extra security modules and features in the full versions and ask yourself if you will use them. Then choose the one that's right for you.

WorldMags.net

Web User's top tips

Our team of experts show you how to **take control of the advertising** in your browser

TOP TIPS FOR HANDLING ADS ON THE WEB

Spot fake links and buttons

All adverts are annoying but those that pretend to be something else to trick you into clicking them are particularly infuriating. To see an example of this, go to www.brothersoft.com and select one of the freeware or shareware programs. You'll see multiple download buttons and text links on the page that make it extremely difficult to know which one you're supposed to click.

One way of making sure that you're clicking the correct one is to let your mouse hover over the link or button. The URL of the link is displayed at the bottom of the browser window. If it doesn't look right, don't click it.

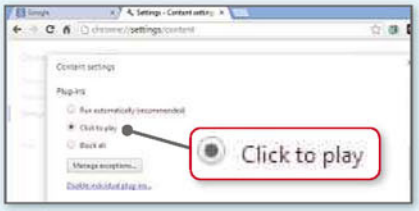
For example, if the link contains the word 'googleads', it's an advert and not a download link. Download links are more likely to link to another page on the site you're visiting, or point to a file hosted on that site.

Block Flash adverts

A lot of ads are created using Adobe Flash, which brings them to life with animation. Unfortunately, this makes them even more annoying. However, they can easily be blocked.

You could simply uninstall Flash completely using 'Programs and Features' in the Control Panel, but then certain Flash-based sites, including YouTube and Vimeo, won't work at all. A less drastic solution is to disable Flash except when you need it, which allows you to bypass the ads.

In Chrome, go to the menu button and choose Settings. Click 'Show advanced settings', find the Privacy section and click the 'Content settings' button. Scroll down to the Plug-ins section and select 'Click to play'. Any Flash content on a page will now be displayed as a grey rectangle. If it's an advert, you can ignore it, but if it's something you want to see, such as a video clip, you can click the rectangle to play it.



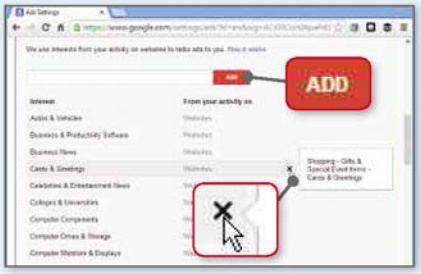
At the right-hand side of Chrome's address box is an icon that you can click to add the current website as an exception, so that Flash content always plays from that site. Add YouTube, Vimeo and any other sites that use Flash, so you can watch the videos without having to click each one.

If you use Firefox and want to set up a similar feature, type `about:config` into the address box. Start typing `plugins.click_to_play` into the search box and double-click it when it appears. Change the value from 'false' to 'true'.

Change ad preferences

If you only want to see ads for things you might actually want, you can customise your preferences. Sign into your Google account, then go to www.google.com/ads/preferences. The 'Settings for Google Ads' has two columns: one for ads on Google services and another for ads across the web. Scroll down to the Interests section and click the Edit link in each column. This lists the subjects that Google thinks are of interest to you.

By customising the list, you can change the nature of the adverts you're shown. Move your mouse over the interests to see a cross appear on the right. Click this to remove a topic. The box at the top of the list lets you add your own topics, such as astronomy, mobile phones, travel or whatever interests you.



At the bottom of the Ads Settings page are links to opt out of interest-based adverts. This means that ads you see will be random or based on the web page's content. Get the IBA Opt-out add-on for Chrome (bit.ly/optout327) to block the DoubleClick advertising cookie, which stores personal information such as your interests.

Block interest-based ads

Google isn't the only company to track you and base its adverts on your interests. Go to www.aboutads.info/choices to see a list of other advertisers that do it. You can tick the boxes next to a company to stop it tracking your web activity. If you want to block them all, use the button at the bottom of the page to create opt-out cookies.

Site-specific options

Some websites have configuration options that include ways of controlling or modifying the adverts displayed. Facebook, for example, lets you hide adverts. Sponsored posts have Like and Hide buttons in the top right corner and clicking Hide prevents an ad from being shown again. You can also resize the width of the browser window so that it's only wide enough for your news feed and the advertising column on the right is hidden from view.

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3	plusnet	Plusnet: Broadband & calls	£9.99 (£2.99 for 9 months)	18 months	16Mb max speed	∞ unlimited	£56.88
4	sky	Sky: Broadband & calls	£10.00 (HALF PRICE for 12 months)	12 months	16Mb max speed	∞ unlimited	£60.00
5	EE	EE: Broadband & calls	£10.00 (HALF PRICE for 12 months)	12 months	16Mb max speed	∞ unlimited **	£60.00 ***
6	Virgin media	Virgin: TV, Broadband & calls	£14.50 (HALF PRICE for 6 months)	18 months	30Mb max speed	∞ unlimited	£130.50
7	plusnet	Plusnet: Fibre Broadband & calls	£19.99 (£12.99 for 9 months)	18 months	76Mb max speed	∞ unlimited	£176.88
8	sky	Sky: Fibre Broadband & calls	£20.00 (HALF PRICE for 6 months)	18 months	38Mb max speed	∞ unlimited	£180.00
9	John Lewis Broadband	John Lewis: Broadband & calls	£18.00	12 months	16Mb max speed	∞ unlimited **	£216.00
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Data supplied by www.broadbandgenie.co.uk. Correct as of 10 September 2013.

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Get to grips with some serious PC DIY to boost your computer's performance

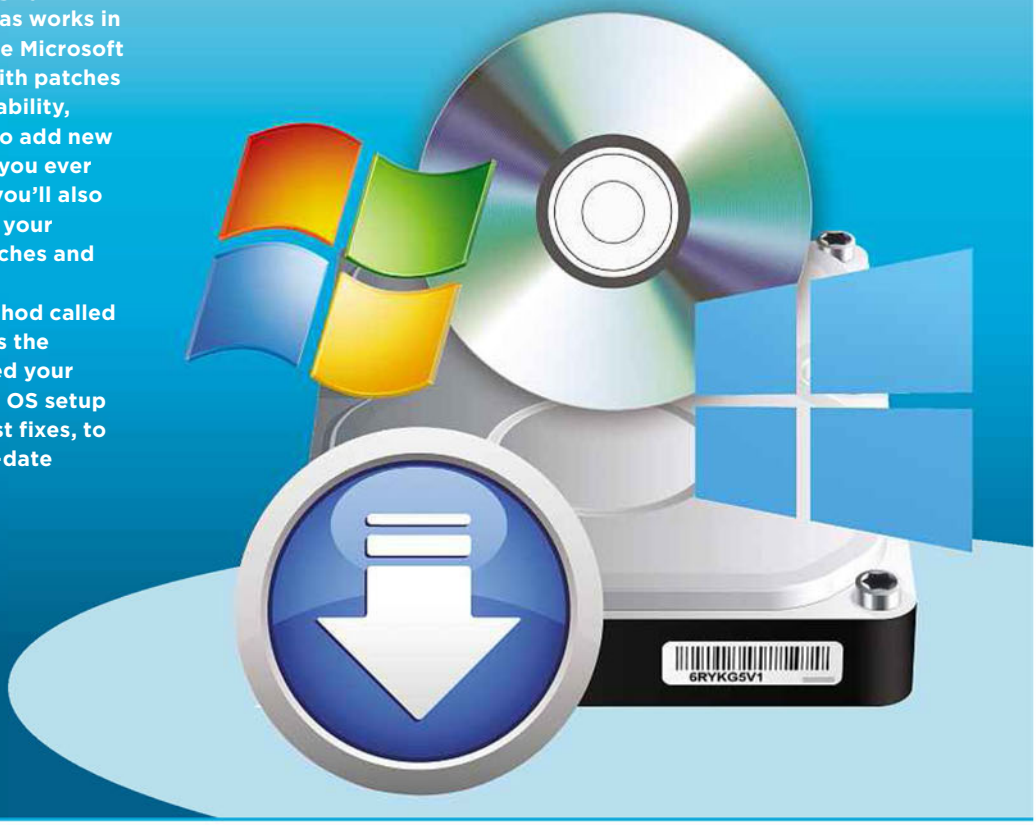
How to...

Reinstall Windows more easily with a slipstreamed disc

Wayne Williams shows you how to create Windows installation discs that have recent updates already loaded

Windows operating systems are best viewed as works in progress because Microsoft continually updates them with patches and 'hotfixes' to improve stability, security and, occasionally, to add new features. This means that if you ever have to reinstall Windows, you'll also have the hassle of updating your computer with all those patches and service packs.

Fortunately, there's a method called slipstreaming that combines the original disc files (you'll need your installation disc, or relevant OS setup in ISO format) with the latest fixes, to produce a new, more up-to-date installer.



Slipstream Windows 8

Although there are no system packs for Windows 8 (Microsoft has switched to rolling out updated versions of its OS instead, with Windows 8.1 being the first), there are plenty of updates you can include in a new installer. You can also customise the set-up, so it only installs specific elements, and tailor Windows to your preferences, such as pre-installing your favourite wallpaper and browser homepage.

One of the easiest ways to slipstream the new operating system is to use WinReducer (www.winreducer.net). This is beta software, so is still being tested, but it's stable and you shouldn't have any problems with it.

Before you can produce your updated installer, you'll need to manually install some additional tools. Launch the version of the program you require (either 32- or 64-bit) and, after the error message, click the various download links to go to each publisher's site and install the relevant software. You'll also need to download 7-Zip (version 9.30 alpha from bit.ly/zip327, not the main release) to unzip GetWaikTools. Once you've extracted the files, run GetWaikTools and download the items for Windows 8.

You'll need extra software, such as GetWaikTools, but WinReducer tells you where to get them

Go back to WinReducer, click one box at a time and point the software at each program's EXE file. You'll find 7-Zip and Resource Hacker in Program Files;

Get more practical advice at forum.webuser.co.uk
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You need to tell WinReducer where to find all the files it needs to work

ImageX and Oscdimg in the GetWaik folder; and SetACL wherever you saved it to. When all the required programs are green, you're good to go. Follow the instructions in our Mini Workshop (below) to complete the process.

Slipstream Windows 7

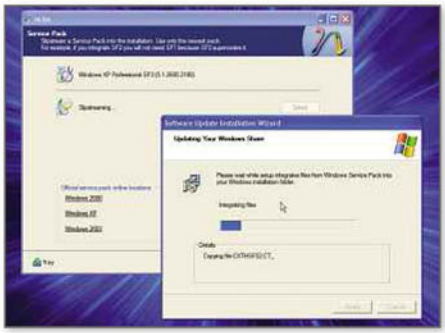
RT Se7en Lite (www.rt7lite.com) lets you create your own Windows 7 installer with the latest service pack, updates and custom preferences in place. Unlike WinReducer, it doesn't require much work to set up.

Start by downloading the beta (build 2.6.0), making sure you get the correct version for your OS: 32- (x86) or 64-bit (x64), then install and run it. Place the Windows 7 disc in your drive, open it and copy all the files to a folder on your hard drive. Download the Windows 7 Service Pack 1 ISO from Microsoft and save it somewhere you can easily find it. Follow the instructions in our Mini Workshop on page 73 to finish the job.

Slipstream Windows XP

XP has had loads of updates since its release in 2001, including three service packs. If you install Windows XP using an original install CD, or one from a few years back, you may have to add the updates and service packs after installation, which will be extremely time-consuming. Creating a slipstream disc for XP is therefore vital. Fortunately, it's also very easy to do.

Download SP3, place your existing Windows CD in your drive, and install and run nLite (www.nliteos.com). Click Next and browse to the CD. When prompted, save the installation files to your hard drive: the copying process will take a while. Click Next twice. You'll be asked what you want to customise. Select Service Pack along with other options, if required. Click Next, then click the Select button. Browse for the saved SP3 file on your hard drive. The software will start integrating files from the Service Pack into the Windows installation folder.



nLite will reinstall Windows XP without taking a whole weekend to do it

When it's done, click Next. You can either create an ISO image for burning to CD or DVD later, or write the slipstreamed files straight to disc. Choose the option you want under Mode.

Slipstream Windows Vista

Although most Vista users will already have upgraded to Windows 7 or 8, there are some who haven't yet made the move, or are more than happy to stick with XP's oft-maligned successor. If

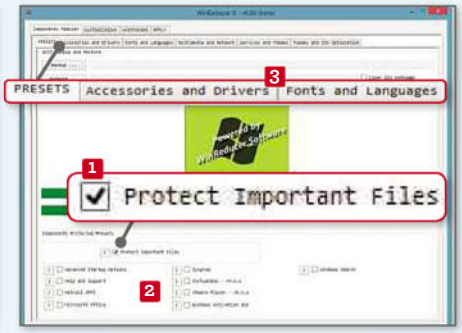
SERVICE PACK CENTRE

Microsoft usefully keeps all available service packs – from XP to Windows 7 – in one place, so you can find out what's included and download them straight to your PC for slipstreaming. Just go to bit.ly/servicepack327.

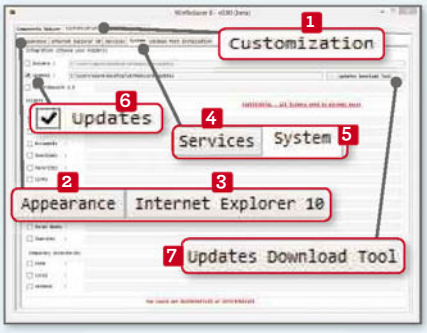
Service Packs of all current versions of Windows are available on one website

MINI WORKSHOP | Create a custom Windows 8 installer using WinReducer

1 Insert your Windows disc into the drive and copy its contents to a folder on your hard drive. Click Open 1 and direct WinReducer to the folder. You can also extract an ISO image. 2 Choose the edition of Windows 8 you have and click the Mount button. 3



2 Tick Protect Important Files 1 and any other component boxes you need 2 (so you don't accidentally remove anything important). The row of tabs 3 lets you cut down on space by removing features and elements you don't need. Don't remove anything unless you're sure it's not needed.



3 Customization 1 lets you change Windows 8's appearance, 2 for example by setting the wallpaper. You can customise IE10 3 and manage services. 4 The System tab 5 lets you add new drivers and updates. Tick Updates, 6 select a folder, then click Updates Download Tool. 7 Go to Apply to have WinReducer create the new disc.

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MINI WORKSHOP | Slipstream Windows 7 using RT Se7en Lite

1 Click Browse 1 and, from the tiny drop-down menu, either select the OS path to where you copied the Windows 7 set-up files or select an ISO image file. A list of operating systems will open. Select the version for which you want to build a new installer. 2 Tick Slipstream Service Pack 3 to integrate SP1.

2 In the window that opens, click Browse 1 and locate the service pack. It will ask for an EXE file. If the service pack is in ISO form, extract it using a program such as 7-Zip. Select the relevant Windows version, then click the Start button. 2 RT Se7en Lite will begin loading and preparing everything.

3 Once the process is complete, click Proceed, then Task 1 and select the options you require. 2 Integration 3 lets you add drivers, updates and applications, while Features Removal 4 lets you strip out unwanted Windows elements. Go to ISO Bootable 5 to save the slipstreamed installer as an ISO image or burn it to disc.

you're a Vista die-hard, you can create a slipstreamed disk using vLite (www.vlite.net). You'll probably need to add some additional software for the program to function correctly, so click the Install button when prompted. vLite lets you create an unattended installer, and save space by stripping out various components. The list of features that can be omitted is very comprehensive, including screensavers, wallpapers, Windows Media Player, the Photo Gallery and Windows Mail.

Slipstream Windows Vista using the vLite tool

Test your slipstreamed installation disc

Once you've created an updated installation disc, you should test it, to make sure everything works as intended. The last thing you want to happen is to format your hard drive, go to reinstall Windows, and find there's a problem and you can't proceed.

The easiest way to test everything is to install the operating system in a virtual environment using VirtualBox (www.virtualbox.org). To do this, run VirtualBox and click New in the window. Enter the name of the operating system (Windows 8, Windows 7, Windows Vista or Windows XP) and VirtualBox will fill in the rest. Click Next and accept the suggested memory size. Choose to 'Create a virtual hard drive now', click Create and accept VDI (VirtualBox Disk Image) as the hard drive type. Create a dynamic drive and accept the default disk size. Click Create.

VirtualBox is a handy way to test your disc before you run the installation

Once the drive has been built, click the Start button in the Manager, navigate to the new installation disc and click Start. Windows will now begin to install. Fill in all your details as usual and, when the installation is complete, you can check to make sure everything is working as it should be.

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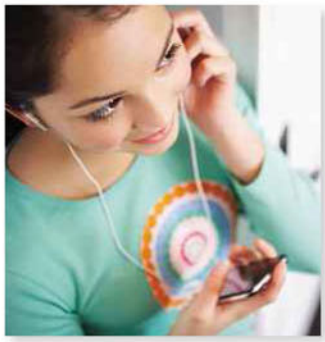

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